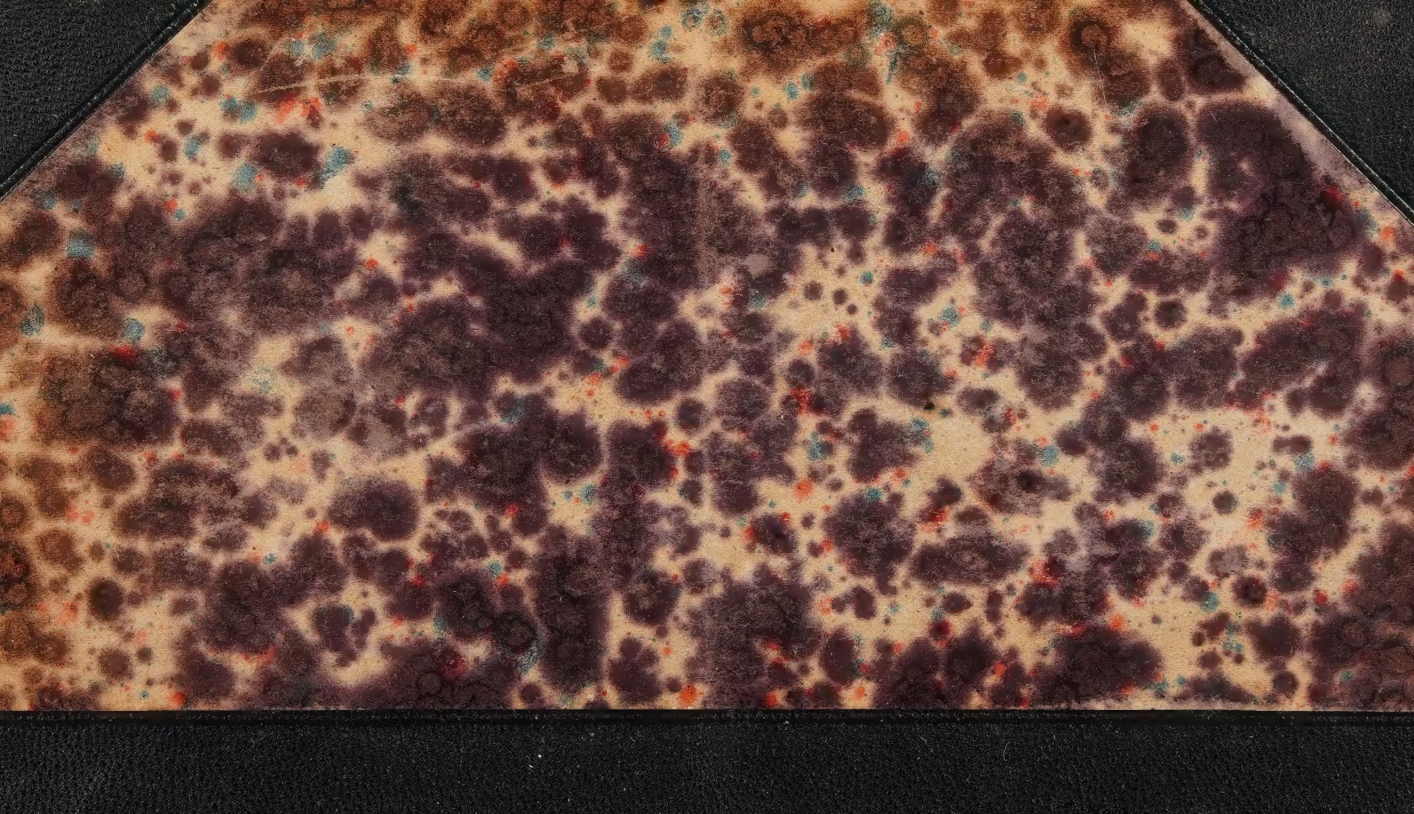

SIGILL. SCHOLÆ RELIGIONIS PACIFICÆ
CONDITÆ A.D. 1866
PRO
VERITATE
ET
REGNO
DEI
CHARLES HOLBROOK LIBRARY
Pacific School of Religion

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026 with funding from
Graduate Theological Union

https://archive.org/details/discoursesonjewi05lees

DISCOURSES

ON

THE JEWISH RELIGION.

BY

ISAAC LEESER.

הלוא כה דברי נאם ה' כאש וכפטיש יפוצץ סלע:
ירמ' כג' כט':

"Behold! thus is my word, saith the Lord, like the fire, and like the hammer that shivereth the rock."

Jeremiah xxiii. 29.

GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL UNION
LIBRARY
1962

VOL. V.

THIRD SERIES.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY SHERMAN & CO.
5627.

BM
740
L425
1836
v.5

36182

EX
L518
v.5

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867,

BY ISAAC LEESER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

STEREOTYPED BY SHERMAN & CO.

CONTENTS OF VOL. V.

DISCOURSE		PAGE
I.	The Vicissitudes of Life,	1
II.	The Eternity of the Covenant,	18
III.	Consolation of Israel,	35
IV.	Bible Duties,	53
V.	Regeneration,	70
VI.	The Covenant with Noah,	86
VII.	Gratitude to God,	102
VIII.	Motives of Thankfulness,	118
IX.	On Miracles, No. IV.,	140
X.	The Covenant at Horeb,	157
XI.	The Blessings of Religion,	172
XII.	Time and Eternity,	188
XIII.	Reverence for the Sanctuary,	205
XIV.	The Revelation on Horeb,	223
XV.	Our Religious Teachers,	239
XVI.	The Essence of Religion,	258
XVII.	The Destiny of Israel,	274
XVIII.	The Sin of Slander,	290
XIX.	The Coming Year,	306
XX.	On Atonement and Acceptance,	322
XXI.	The Object of the Creation,	338
XXII.	Sentiment and Practice,	359
XXIII.	Fulfilment of Prophecy,	376
XXIV.	The Dangers and Defences of Judaism,	389

DISCOURSES

ON THE

JEWISH RELIGION.

DISCOURSE I.

THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE.

O Lord of life! to Thee ascends our prayer. O Great Father! thy children seek thy favour; they come unto thy gracious throne feeling their weakness, humbled because of thy power! What are they? they are as the flower that bloometh in the morning and is cut off and withereth ere the sun hath set; they flourish awhile like the cedars on Lebanon; but soon the blast cometh, and they are thrown down and crushed, and their day is ended. But Thou,—Thou art the everliving He, whose days are numberless; whose power never faileth, whose happiness knoweth no sorrow. To Thee therefore do we fly whenever calamity reaches us, whenever the rumour of sorrow is brought home to our spirit. It is then that we feel that in Thee, O Father! is our only refuge! that with Thee, O our God! is our only safety. And so it was

in every age. Man progresseth in sin, while the prosperity which Thou bestowest smileth on him; he feeleth himself great in his own strength, and he heedeth not thy voice which speaketh to him out of thy holy Book, which appeals to him from the thousand works which proclaim Thee Creator and King. Yet when the evil entereth his dwelling: O then he feeleth himself powerless in thy hand, knoweth then that his prosperity was the gift of thy bounty. And Thou receivest in favour the erring mortal, who thus humbleth himself in thy presence; Thou openest the chambers of his heart that the truth, revealed to him by calamity, may find a permanent abiding in his soul, that he may become a worthy servant in thy house, a true worshipper in thy sanctuary; in order that his mourning may be turned unto joy, his sorrow into the brightness of salvation.

Accept therefore also this day in favour the assembling of thy children who have been brought together to call on Thee, because of the outpouring of thy wrath which has swept over the islands of the sea, and made their homes desolate, and slain their men, their women and their children. Grant that this visitation may redound to our improvement, that we may be rendered humble and righteous through it, that we may truly view it as the evidence of thy power. And to those who suffer send the healing of thy holy spirit; may it support them in their sorrow, and may farther evil be removed from them; for we know Thee as the Physician who woundeth and whose hands also heal, as the Father who correcteth the child He wisheth to improve.

And upon thy children of the house of Israel have

mercy, and may thy grace and goodness guide them securely amidst the tribulations and trials of life, because of thy unending mercies. Amen.

Brethren and Friends!

Already the chief of all prophets spoke in his sublime prayer:

זרמתם שנה יהיו בבקר כחציר יחלף : בבקר
יציץ חלף לערב ימולל ויבש : תהל' צ' ה' ו' :

"Thou carriest them away as a flood, they are as in sleep; in the morning they are like the grass which changeth; in the morning it flourisheth and is renovated, and in the evening it is cut down and withereth." Psalm xc. 5, 6.

Experience in every age has proved the nothingness of all things to which the human heart is clinging; and yet one generation perishes, and another generation springs up like the grass of the field, and the same result is witnessed; for men ever pursue the same vanities, and gold, and pleasure, and fame, and power are the idols to which they bend the knee in senseless adoration. Nay, more, the very persons who exclaim with the preacher who had tasted of all earthly blessings, "All is vanity!" are themselves not seldom foremost among the crowd who pursue the ever-fleeting phantom, that flits before them leading them on to destruction, as the swamp-light which, deceiving the weary traveller, causes him to plunge hopelessly into pitfalls and quagmires, whence he cannot, unless with great wariness and labour, extricate his ensnared feet. Is it that mankind is afflicted with blindness? is it that the world was created for evil

only? To reason thus would be accusing the Creator of injustice, it would be charging Him with producing innumerable beings for a state of misery and endless sorrow;—for even were the goods of the world conferring unalloyed happiness, it would be the few only who would be blessed, whilst the many, destined to a life of pain, of labour, of poverty, of suffering, of inglory, must of necessity be shut out from the only happiness thus existing. But no! in God there is no injustice! in Him there is no evil! it is man only who is wilfully blind, it is he only who turns the blessings given him into destructive poisons.—For let us see whether there be anything absolutely wrong in the ownership of wealth, the enjoyments of life, the possession of an honoured name, and in ruling over our fellow-men? Candour and truth will compel us to answer that, if properly employed, they are all blessings, and it is only the abuse of them and their improper seeking which can become hurtful to their possessors, and injurious to others.—If one has wealth, he can live at ease without a constant racking care about the morrow; he can keep his children under his own roof, impart unto them good instruction; and above all he can hasten to the assistance of those on whom the hand of misfortune has heavily fallen. In addition to this, and what is most important to the wealthy one himself, he has leisure to devote much time to the state of his soul, he can spare many hours for meditation, and endeavour to trace out the secret sins that dwell within him, and improve the rebellious heart that draws him with the cords of iniquity unto the ways of transgression. What think you will be the state of a rich man who thus employs his wealth,

and the leisure it produces? Surely he must be a blessing to himself and others, contentment will reign within his soul, and many a smile will be lighted up among those who are within his reach, and he will be happier than those less favoured, not because that he has wealth, but that he has the heart to enjoy it properly, and the will to make it useful to others. In such a conduct wealth is not regarded as a something valuable in itself, but as a means of happiness, and in its being this, only inasmuch as it is employed for purposes in which true wisdom can discover a useful and permanent object.—In other words, the possession of a million of pieces of silver is in itself no happiness; but it may promote in the possessor happy and lastingly-joyful sensations, if he employs the superabundance of his means in lightening the heart of the sufferer of its sorrow, and in qualifying himself to be just to all men and obedient to the will of Heaven. A rich man who has reached this degree of elevation will not value himself because that he has more wealth than his neighbour; the weight of his gold will not bend him down to earth as the slave of avarice, the captive of base worldliness; but he will regard himself as the agent of his God, as one who has been appointed to administer a part of the blessings sent into the world for the benefit of many, to the injury of none.

In the same manner must we regard the enjoyment of worldly pleasures.—God has created many things for our use; He has even clothed the earth with a beautiful mantle of green and studded it with thousands of brilliant flowers; wherever we go beauty enchants the eye, sweet scents invigorate the nostrils,

melodious sounds greet the ear, and pleasant things are there to gratify the palate. And go where you will there are evidences that the Lord created every thing for our earthly enjoyment; and there exists nothing that has life, even the minutest animalcule, but it has lively emotions of pleasure, and enjoys the existence it has received. But how should we enjoy life? Even as the gift of God, as the thing which He has bestowed, as that which He can resume. If now in his fear we enter the world, where the table is, so to say, spread before us with all manner of dainties springing from the hand of universal Love: how meekly will we taste, how piously will we enjoy! Not a flower there is, not a fruit does grow, but it affords cause for thankfulness; and the consecration of all to the service of God, the returning of our acknowledgment for whatever we receive, will throw a holiness around our very pleasures, and make the enjoyment of things of the earth a worship holy unto the Most High!

To Abraham it was said: "And thou shalt be a blessing," as a commentary upon the preceding words, "and I will make great thy name." And only when a man's deeds constitute him a blessing to his fellow-beings, can a great name be desired; for then only it is based upon the foundation of all goodness, the service of the Lord, who desires that in serving Him we should also endeavour to imitate his acts of benevolence towards all mankind; and we thus only become great, we only thus deserve an honoured name, when we have fulfilled these duties. But if we have, then is the necessary consequence of such conduct the love and respect of others, and therefore these gifts,

too, are within the legitimate bounds to which our desire may, and what is more, should extend; not that we should do good to receive praise and renown; but that we have a right to look in some measure to the approbation of the wise and the good; and their praise is the only thing which is worth obtaining, since the approval of the wicked is at times the severest condemnation which our conduct can receive.

The possession of power by some of its members is necessary for the government of society; where all rule equally, where there is no restraint, there can be no security, consequently it is requisite that, as all cannot govern at once, many must be subjected to the rule of others, and this fact obtains in the freest government. To be, then, intrusted with power is nothing else than to exercise an authority for the time being, which can and ought to be exerted for the benefit of all; consequently there is nothing morally wrong in the possession of power any more than in that of wisdom, wealth, and fame. But this too should be held in humility and meekness, as a gift from God, who thereby has imposed upon one of his servants an additional duty, to be useful in a superior degree to other sons of man. This holds good with respect to every office of authority, from the chief of a school where children learn their first lessons in the alphabet, up to the chief magistrate of a mighty nation; since all should look upon their power, not as a subject for self-congratulation, as a motive for pride, and as an incentive to despise those beneath them; because the authority was not created for the benefit of the individual invested with the same, but in order that peace and good-will may be preserved among

the masses. The man, therefore, who finds himself temporarily in power, has no right to think himself any better or any nearer to immortal happiness, than those who are bound to obey his commands; since he himself is a servant of, and subordinate to the same eternal Power, by whose sufferance nations rise into being, and princes sit securely on their thrones.

We thus see that unto those who are truly wise all earthly gifts are blessings, inasmuch as by their proper use the glory of God and the happiness of man can be promoted in an eminent degree. In addition to these natural deductions for the proper regulation of ourselves as drawn from reason, it must not be forgotten that we have a far superior guide to direct us safely in our pilgrimage, and this, as you all know, is the light of revelation; for this shows us that we are commanded to be charitable with our means; thankful to Providence for his bounty; to seek a fair name only in the way of righteousness, and to employ our power solely for the good of all under our care.

With regard to those who are not blessed with a large portion of worldly things, we may say, that they can find in their very absence the stimulant for the constant activity which the All-wise designed for man on earth; he was created to be continually striving after perfection; and since, as a mixed being, mixed of good and evil, the purely spiritual could not possibly have sufficiently attracted him, worldly pursuits were among other things assigned to him, in order to excite him to work and to employ his intellect, so that he may have always an object to attain, the very pursuit of which, even if it remain unattain-

able, will be a source of enjoyment to him in the hours of labour.

The few words I have used in elucidating this point must have clearly established the perfect *justice* of the Lord in his government of the world; He selects those, whom from wise purposes He deems the most fitting, to be in certain things above the level of the general mass, as we have said, for the benefit of the very multitude over which they are elevated; and at the same time we ought to reflect that they, who are neither wealthy nor otherwise distinguished from the great crowd around them, may never desire those things which the wealthy and luxurious deem requisite to their well-being, and that habit may inure them to hardships which give them a zest in existence, which the great and the pampered sigh for in vain.

We say therefore that mankind has not been left in darkness; for there is a light which leads all, if they will only seek it, and heed it when it is found; and that the Lord has done us no wrong by permitting in his providence that worldliness should be the natural propensity of the children of the dust; since the proper use of earthly goods and the lawful enjoyments of the gifts of this perishable state will lead us to the possession of that perfect happiness which is the portion of the righteous in the life everlasting.

But it is man himself who poisons the sources of happiness; the waters of life would flow on in a stream dispensing health, scattering blessings; but we ourselves mingle with mortal drugs the healthful element, and daringly accuse an all-wise God of having destined us for evil. But say, can a pursuit of

the avocations of life, if followed up in the spirit of religion, be injurious to any one? can any evil result if the righteous is possessed of wealth? if a healthy body permits him to enjoy in moderation the gifts which the Creator has provided everywhere? if his name is honoured among his contemporaries, and blessed by succeeding generations? who suffers when the servant of the Lord holds in his hands the reins of earthly government? No one. What is therefore the cause, that moralists inveigh, and justly so, against the pursuit of worldly goods? It is because the man of the world pursues them as things valuable in themselves, places them above the dictates of religion, esteems them more than the favour of his God. Look on yon rich man, his labours have been blessed, success has smiled upon his exertions. See how he feels his importance; he blesses himself in his heart because of the number of his houses, of the hoards of gold in his vaults, of the crowds of menials and flatterers that throng his dwelling. But what good results to others from his wealth? where are the poor whom he feeds? where are the naked whom he clothes? He is rich only for himself, others have no share in the treasures which Providence has allowed him to accumulate; because he has not felt, that all the things which he has acquired have been the gifts of a superior Power, lent him only for a very short time, when he must resign them into hands who laboured not for them, to become in their turn, perhaps, the means of degradation to his children who, educated luxuriously without the fear of God early implanted in their minds, fall a prey to low dissipation or to the constant pursuit of the pleasures inci-

dent to a gay and fashionable life, and perish prematurely in the midst of their days.

Here is a man of moderate circumstances, equally removed from wealth and poverty. God gives him his daily bread, and his labour is sufficient for all his necessary wants. But the spirit of envy seizes upon him; he beholds the greatness of others, and imagines that the ways of righteousness deprive him of success. And straightways his ancient integrity is forgotten; lessons of piety learned in early infancy are thrown aside, and he weens, that by iniquity, he can successfully climb the ladder of advancement. Now consider, beloved friends, whether he fails in his object, or whether he succeeds, he has but little cause to congratulate himself for having, to gain mere wealth, forsaken the peaceful paths of religion; he will, if he clutches the so ardently sought for gold, in his old age curse the hour that he lent his ear to the seductive voice of his tempter; he will feel its weight crushing his spirit, which encumbered by sin and forgetfulness of God, will in vain struggle to rise above the thoughts of the world, unless the grace of the Lord hastens to his aid and makes him feel by a timely correction, perhaps by the loss of the very wealth he coveted, that it is time for him to renounce the earth and its allurements, and to seek for happiness where alone it can be found, in the everlasting God and his holy Word.

The voluptuary and the ambitious, who thirst for pleasure, who are avaricious of renown, who are greedy for power, do not know life, nor do they estimate properly the destiny that awaits them. For if they have succeeded to their fullest extent, if one un-

varied round of pleasure has attended them from their infancy, if their name is spread over all the earth, if their power has extended over many empires, it is all but endeavouring to build up a fabric that cannot last. For if even their days be extended in undiminished vigour to a period of five score years, death will come at length and snatch from them the cup of pleasure, blot out the name which is so honoured, and strike down the power which has been so much dreaded; and then will lie low the hearts that felt themselves so elated, so pleased, so dreaded; and another generation will arise and heap odium and scorn on the memory of the men who knew not God in their pleasures, who feared not their Maker in the acquisition of renown, and who perchance oppressed their fellow-men in the days of their power.

But the glory of man endures but for a brief period; and no matter how much wealth, wisdom, renown, pleasure, power, have fallen to his share, his abode on earth is not so long extended as we have assumed, and even his short existence is at best chequered with anxieties, with sorrows, with disease. The cup of life, except to the humble and pious, and they too have not rarely to feel their mortality, is mingled often and often with the bitterness of wormwood, and to the most successful, to the brightest genius, there are hours of darkness, for which the poorest and most debased, were they to know the truth, would pity those whom they think so enviable for the greatness which the world accords to them. And it is solely by placing a firm reliance on our heavenly Father, by convincing ourselves that whatever is is right, and existing for a benevolent purpose

only, that we can bear up against all the evils which constantly present themselves in our varied career, and this only can save us from despair, and teach us to submit to the decrees of infinite Justice with meekness and resignation. And, believe me, where this feeling predominates, there will be peace within; and though the heart be occasionally restive and rebellious, the spirit of true wisdom will soon recover its mastery, and the clouds of discontent will vanish, and the rays of heavenly light will again illumine the chambers of the anxious and troubled bosom.

Yet the majority of mankind have not this wisdom. For they hasten along as though their days were to last for ever, as though their joy were never dying. They live on the brink of a smoking volcano: yet they build houses and plant vineyards, and vainly imagine that the foundations of those will never be moved, and the greenness of the last be never fading. In their houses resound the tones of music and the voices of song; the giddy dance re-echoes through their lofty halls, their tables groan under the weight of viands and the bread of delight. Death with his grim terrors is far, far, removed from their eyes, and they behold not in the distant vista the cloud of wo that will burst in terrific fury over their heads. But whilst they dally with the tresses of beauty, whilst they quaff the goblet in which the ruddy wine sparkles and foams, whilst the foot is upraised in the mazes of the dance, whilst the harp and the viol discourse melodious sounds: the crater becomes full to overflowing, and the fiery stream of destruction is poured over the vineclad brim, and it strikes the houses and their inmates, and they are

swept off, are carried away ere they heed that the evil has come.

Is this a true picture of life? ask your experience, and it will tell you, appeal to the lessons of ages, and they will instruct you. How then should we do? how should we be wise? Even as the word of God teaches us, in the midst of joy we should remember our mortality, in the midst of business occupation we should reflect that we have something more to toil for than these perishable limbs; that our soul, the nobler part of ourselves, needs purification ere she can enter the kingdom of heaven, for which she is destined as her everlasting dwelling. For when the body has flourished like the grass in the morning, and been cut down before the evening, our spirit does not perish; but it will bloom in immortal glory, if we have only enriched it with deeds of righteousness and mercy, as demanded by our God.

We have many lessons of the mutability of human happiness; every day brings to light some instance to prove the vanity of every thing under the sun to which the heart is clinging; but scarcely can an example be cited more awful from its suddenness and extent, than that which, a few months back, overwhelmed some of the fairest portions of the West India Islands, countries enjoying a perpetual spring, where the breeze is loaded with a thousand perfumes, where all that can enchant the eye is ever flourishing, and where nature is decked in her gaudiest attire. There is, or rather, there was, among others, one town where commerce had centred, where luxury and art had found a home, it was famed for the beauty of its dwellings, and known as the most agreeable of

its sister cities.—Did the inhabitants dread the coming destruction? O no, they, like we do now in our own city, thought their houses stood firm, their fortunes were secured. But the evil was near; and suddenly the firm earth commenced to rock beneath their feet, and it heaved like the surface of the treacherous ocean, and in an instant of time the town of Point-a-Pitre was a heap of ruins, and thousands of human beings were slain among the wrecks of fallen houses, and thousands of others lay embedded under the weight of crushed beams and loosened walls, in possession of life, yet unable to extricate themselves from their living sepulchre. In the midst of all this terror, before the hand of help could reach them, many of the ruins suddenly blazed forth a prey to fire, and this new element of destruction strode along in its march of fury, and overthrew what the earthquake had spared. O, vain were the shrieks of the wounded, without avail the groans of the dying; human aid stood aghast before the arm that was outstretched, until the ruin of so much wealth, pleasantness, and skill was consummated. Perhaps ten thousand human beings like ourselves fell a sacrifice to an awful death or were maimed for life, and the survivors are left without the means of support, bereft of all the fruits of their labour and industry. Their very soil has become a ruin; hills have been thrown down, their springs of water have disappeared, and fountains of muddy boiling water have taken their places. So suddenly, so fearfully, did all this take place, that the witnesses themselves could hardly realize what they themselves had seen and suffered; and now in their distress they stretch forth their hands

imploringly, even across the mighty ocean which divides us from them, to ask aid and assistance from the inhabitants of this land, which is blessed with abundance, despite of the many vicissitudes which have lately befallen it. They, whom Providence has severely afflicted, appeal to those blessed with means more than themselves, they whose homes are ruins, ask of those who dwell in security to reflect, that their means and their homes also may one day fall before the destroyer, who ever he may be; they implore them to remember those who were suddenly rendered poor, suddenly maimed, suddenly deprived of their natural protector, suddenly rendered widows and orphans, and to give them a small portion of their superfluities, that they who now mourn may rise again from their mourning, and rebuild their houses on their old foundations, and have cause to bless those who aided them when the arm of misfortune rested heavily on them.

We therefore appeal to you, beloved friends! in behalf of those who have suffered, and still suffer, by the calamity we have faintly described to you. We could paint to you the terror of the living who felt the firm soil beneath them unsteady and yielding; we could harrow up your feelings by laying before you one of the wounded who, still alive after hours of unspeakable sufferings under a heap of ruins, is extricated only to breathe his last when again freed from this horrible tomb; we could sketch to you, how mothers sought in vain for their infants, and wives for their husbands; but we forbear, for we could add nothing to arouse your sensibility, beyond the simple fact, that a town containing nearly twenty

thousand inhabitants, one of the wealthiest and handsomest in all the Antilles, is suddenly overthrown, completely ruined, and nearly half the population killed or wounded, and that the survivors have been compelled to live upon roots and such miserable provisions as they have been able to save out of the wreck. They are not, like the inhabitants of a continent, within the reach of immediate relief from kind neighbours; but days and weeks must elapse before ships from distant shores can come freighted with the necessary succour. Many of our countrymen have already extended the helping hand; and let us hope, that those who have assembled here this day for the same benevolent purpose will not go away before they have amply proved that their heart can sympathize for sufferers, though they are not of the same creed and country. This is a beautiful trait in genuine charity; she only hears that there is suffering, and she is moved by the appeal; her heart at once responds to the tears she sees glistening in the eyes of the distressed, and she asks not who they are? but at once devises means of relief, and is blessed herself whilst blessing others; and she would be untrue to herself, were she to close her hand, because the cry proceeded from those who speak a different tongue or worship in a different temple. Do this, you especially of my hearers who are of the house of Israel, and prove that whatever you have suffered from an unfriendly world, your feelings have not been blunted, your ear has not been closed against the appeals of sorrow. And may your charity, and the charity of all mankind, be blessed with this twofold blessing, may the distressed be thereby relieved, and may mu-

tual kindness and forbearance thence arise to bind in one bond of union and love the hearts of all mankind, of whatever creed and country.—May the Lord also be with us as we trust in Him, and preserve us from evil, and let the light of his countenance shine unto us, in this life and the life to come. Amen.

NOTE.—The appeal made as above was not in vain, and it may be here recorded, that about one-tenth part of all collected for the relief of the sufferers by the great earthquake of 1843 in Guadaloupe came from the Hebrew congregation Mikve Israel.

Nissan 30th. } 5603.
April 30th. }

DISCOURSE II.

THE ETERNITY OF THE COVENANT.

O THOU! who didst appear in thy glory in the midst of thousands of bright spirits, amidst adoring hosts of ministering angels, before the enraptured gaze of millions of sinful men to teach them law and wisdom, mercy and righteousness, in order that they might truly worship Thee, and forever fear thy power, and bless thy glorious Name: do now uphold what Thou then didst establish; let thy glory dwell among us; let us be conscious of thy grace; let us feel the presence of thy spirit of counsel and wisdom; and let thy heavenly peace reign within our gates, that no strife and contention may mar the harmony which ought to characterize thy people Israel; inasmuch as they

are all thy own children, thy first born whom Thou didst call unto thy service, to proclaim thy mercy and thy truth wherever thy power is felt and known, through all ages, under all circumstances—whether at their going out from Egypt, whether during the greatest splendour of their kingdom, or when they wandered again into captivity under the Babylonian conqueror or the Roman destroyer, or when they cried aloud from the midst of the slaughter which the worshippers of a newly invented belief wrought among them. Do this, O great Father! arrest the rule of strife which now threatens our peace more fearfully than ever did the aliens' sword or general banishment, and save thy flock from the grasp of unfaithful shepherds, who devour the lambs, succour not the diseased, and bind not up the hurts of the wounded. And if the shepherds will not truly feed the flock, O then, everlasting Guardian of all that is good and holy! instruct the flock thyself, that they may walk fearlessly and unharmed the path which Thou hast designed for them as the road of righteousness which Thou wilt bless with thy favour. So that we may ever be blessed with thy grace, that undeserved mercy which Thou benignantly bestowest on thy children, because of thy own truth and mercy, which are everlasting. Amen.

Brethren!

When the Lord purposed to give unto his people Israel law and judgment, He sent his chosen servant unto them to prepare them for this contemplated great event. He had been their Benefactor; He had broken their chains; He had opened the yoke from

off their neck; He had guided them safely through the divided waters of the Red Sea, unharmed by their vengeful pursuers: yet He would not demand of them an unwilling compliance with his commandments; He came but to instruct, to persuade, to induce; and He therefore sought first their voluntary compliance. We may freely say, that the law would not have been given to the Israelites, if they had declared themselves unwilling to receive it; some other nation would in that case have been educated for this glorious bequest; or perhaps some individual, like Moses, might have received the heavenly legacy to transmit it to a numerous posterity, whom a wise Providence might have especially called into being. Some such a procedure would have received the sanction of divine Wisdom, and been executed by divine Power; for it was necessary that the heaven-born religion promulgated through Moses should become the standard of right for all men. But the Israelites then felt no hesitation, they were deeply convinced of the greatness of their Redeemer, of his power, his goodness, and his wisdom, and they were but too happy to be enabled by his gracious permission to unite themselves to Him by the indissoluble ties of kindred and love; kindred, I say,—for by the acceptance of the Torah they became the immediate children of the great Father. He became more intimately than to any other people, God, King, Redeemer, Saviour; and also by the ties of love; for the bestowal of all the grace which the Lord had promised them, and also fulfilled in many memorable instances, on many an eventful occasion, had necessarily the tendency of converting the adoration due to the Supreme, because

of his power and greatness, into the more holy sentiment of filial reverence and love, because that He the Lord is good, and his mercy endureth forever. They therefore willingly assumed the guardianship of the holy covenant, and thus we read, accordingly, in the book of Exodus, xxiv. 7:

ויקח ספר הברית ויקרא באזני העם ויאמרו כל אשר דבר ה׳ נעשה ונשמע : שמות כד׳ ז׳ :

"And he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people, and they said, All which the Lord hath spoken we will do and obey."

What was the pledge the people here gave? It was this: they had hitherto not been bound by the divine law; they had worshipped idols; they had kept no day of rest; they had not abstained from aught that lives which cheweth not the cud nor divideth the hoof among four-footed animals, and of creatures of the sea which have no fins and scales; nor had they abstained from incest, misled to this by the example of their masters. But now a new life was henceforth to distinguish them. No more were they to bow down before idols of gold and of silver, the creatures of their own diseased fancy, or the beautiful star of day, the luminary of the night, or the hosts of the brilliant constellations which cheer nightly the dark blue vault of heaven. They were ordered to withhold their foot from travel on the seventh day of every week, to cease from work, and not even to speak of their plans of labour and arrangements of their everyday business, inasmuch as it was a day holy to them no less than their God, a sign that the Lord is the

Creator of all, and that Israel was chosen as his own peculiar people, for the end that his Name might be sanctified on earth by the children of the dust, as it is glorified among the ministering hosts of the pure spirits that stand at the foot of the throne of grace, adoring the Infinite, the Holy, who to their view also is hidden, too elevated for their conception, too mysterious for their knowledge to realize the extent of his mighty essence.—In their domestic life likewise a distinction should be made between them and the nations; whatever the law declared unclean should be to them an abomination; they should distinguish between the animal which may be eaten and that which may not be eaten; not from any inherent uncleanness in the nature of the thing itself, but simply because it was so decreed in the book of the covenant. So also was their moral life to be on an elevation far above that of their former masters. The affections, even those most powerfully inherent in our natures, should be regulated by the will of God; and no heart should beat with fond desire for all those, whom the law designated as prohibited from causes of consanguinity, or the other reasons handed down to us.—In short, the whole tenor of life was to be a system of restraints based upon the promulgation of those divine decrees, in which no human agency had any influence to direct, advise, or control; but which all sprung from the creative wisdom of the all-wise Creator.

It was this law to which the Israelites vowed a willing fidelity, it was this code which they promised to execute as their part of the covenant. The Almighty had announced to them that they should be to Him

a dearly beloved people if they would obey his will; nay more, He covenanted to them that, from the moment of their acceptance, his faith and his truth should never be broken; that whether they were sinning or righteous his protection should never be withdrawn; that whether united or divided, whether rulers of the world or captives within the stranger's land they should never be cut off entirely, or their nation vanish from amidst the families of mankind. We here see before us the two parties to the most solemn compact which the world has ever witnessed, —the Lord of glory buys unto himself (this is the phrase used in Scripture—Exod. xv. 16) a people to be the proclaimers of his glorious majesty to the world; and these favoured men bind themselves to obey this adorable Being and to follow his guidance, whilst ever there is one left who is descended from their stock or claims kindred with the race of Israel. And now thousands of years have since then elapsed; many hundred times has the earth been clothed with the burden of rich harvests and blessed vintages; many hundred times have the rains of heaven been poured down into the bosom of the thirsty soil, and the snows have peacefully descended to reinvigorate the fields for the labours of the ploughmen; seasons of barbarism have supervened over ages of enlightenment, again to be chased away by the new march of improvement, and the love of sciences rekindled afresh in the hearts of men; whole empires once flourishing with the thousand-armed commerce centring in their ports, with myriads of swords to defend the paternal soil, have passed away into the abyss of destruction, and over their ruins the thorny thistles

wave their moaning heads, and the sand of the desert chokes up the avenues to their palaces and temples; deities once powerful in the number of their worshippers and the host of their priests have one by one retired into the night of oblivion, an abomination to their former adorers; there have sunk Molech, and Baäl, and Jove, and Osiris, and Odin, and Hertha, and many other impurities which demoralized the world, and thus will sink one after the other whatever of falsehood and error is yet worshipped on earth:—yet with all this has the covenant stood firm, its terms have not been broken, and, as there is truth in God and permanence in his promises, so will it continue to stand unshaken and unassailable by the destroyers of all earthly things, the change of circumstances, and the tooth of time.—The Lord has hitherto faithfully preserved the truth of his words which He spoke to Abraham; He has not forsaken, nor left us unprotected when the billows of misfortune rose high above our heads, and swept off our glory and our national existence into the gulf of destruction; and when we were led away by the sinful desires of our hearts to forsake the law, our erring steps were arrested by the timely correction which admonished us that there is a judging God who takes cognizance of whatever occurs in his wide dominions, the world and all that fills it.—And Israel? they, too, have remained faithful up to this moment; it is true they have grievously sinned; often and often did they fall off from the path of righteousness, yielding themselves captives to the sight of their eyes and the desire of their hearts. But when was there a time, even amidst our greatest degradation, that as one entire people

we had renounced the belief in the unity of the Lord, who had revealed himself unto our forefathers on this blessed day on the summit of Sinai? Let our opponents say, when was the day, that there were no high-souled spirits among Jacob's sons who loved dearly the law of their God, and prized his glory above all the earthly gifts which they possessed? who would not yield up every thing dear to them sooner than forswear their allegiance to his holy covenant?

Are these the words of vain boasting? of high-sounding egotism? Then consult the chronicles of our nation, and see at what time an Elijah testified to the truth? when did an Isaiah announce the glory that was to come in after-years? at what period did a Jeremiah foretell the destruction of the house of God and its rebuilding in undying splendour? at what time appeared those zealous for the law when a heathen Antiochus stretched forth his bloody hand to sacrifice all who would remain faithful to their God? at what time did mankind witness deeds of heroism unparalleled in the world's story? when were the martyrs ready to perish for the upholding of the covenant:—was it not always in times of degeneracy of the masses that these glorious signs of life were displayed, by the truly noble souls in whom repose the salvation of Israel and the defence of the law? And can we be accused of boasting? and why should we not boast? For more than thirty centuries, under every circumstance, in every age, in every clime, in every country was the spirit of Israel proved to be one of devotion to the law, of attachment to the covenant of God; and if ever glory attaches to the man of war for not deserting his standard in the hour

of peril, surely great must be the glory of Israel for having proved themselves worthy guardians of the precious treasure, which Divine Providence placed in their hands as a deposit for the ultimate benefit of the whole family of Adam's progeny.

Indeed there have been dark times in the history of our people. There were periods, when a wrathful enemy walked in his triumph over the ruins of cities, over broken-down walls, and shouted when the dwelling of the Lord of glory blazed forth with lurid flames, when destruction seemed to have perched with her pinions of darkness over the land that once was bright, and lay reposing in magnificence and splendour under the brilliant rays of a rising sun gilding and gladdening all, as he sped upwards in his mission to illumine and warm the face of the earth. Ay, these were indeed dark moments; other nations would have despaired, have seized the false hand of the conqueror held out to them in deceitful friendship, and embraced the idols which were offered to their unwilling arms. But not so acted Israel; much they had sinned in prosperity, grievously had they offended when peace dwelt within their tents; but when the bitter cup of adversity was presented to their lips, to be drained with its lees, if they would not forsake the covenant, they drained the brimming bowl of confusion, and turned their ardent gaze to their God and his promises; and whilst yet the prostrate ruins of the temple smoked and blazed upwards, they already took comfort in a hopeful resurrection; they saw their brethren slain by hundreds, cast naked before a troup of enraged lions, sold by ship-loads in hopeless slavery: yet they felt themselves not cast off, and

they saw in the dim future the empire of their tormentors swallowed up in the whirlpool of time, and their own blood avenged by the Lord who said through his prophets, "Mine is vengeance and recompense;" and they beheld those sent forth into slavery returning to Zion with immortal glory on their heads, crowned with joy and salvation; for they were assured that happen what would, be the end speedily approaching or far distant, buried deep in the recesses of time, come it must, and the redeemer would appear unto those who return from transgression in Jacob, and restore the crown to its former place, when the wasted cities are to be built up, and the palaces that are pulled down be restored.

How the soul warms at a contemplation of so much faith! of such simple-minded devotion in the truth of God! It is spirit-stirring to be one of such a race, of a people so steadfast, so devoted, amidst all trials, amidst all the sufferings which have passed over Abraham's race; and well may the gentile pardon us, when we reject his proffered fellowship, when we perseveringly uphold our connexions with the warriors and the martyrs who fought the godly battle, who met willingly a beautiful death, more full of renown than that of the expiring conqueror on the field where he subjugated an entire world.—Yes, brethren! this faith has stood our defence for generation and generation; and amidst every trouble up to our own days, it has been the custom of our nation to look upon itself as destined to be restored to and united in the land of Israel, to see the worship of the Most High reinstated on the hill of Moriah in all the ancient splendour which characterized it of yore, and

with all the permanence which the word of God has predicted for it. Whatever suffering then came to our lot, was considered a preparation for a more hopeful future; whatever joy was meted out to us, was a foretaste of yet happier days in the land of our own heritage. So it was for many centuries, and in every circumstance of our people, whether they were fearfully oppressed for the sake of their religion, or were held in high estimation by their countrymen, and became the advisers, the physicians, or bankers of sovereigns and pontiffs; they always looked upon the scattered state of their nation not as a matter of indifference to every individual, but as an incentive to hope for a reunion at some future day of the divided members of the house of Jacob, at a time when, under the universal rule of the peaceful son of David, there shall prevail tranquillity on earth, and our Messiah be viewed by all men as the messenger of the God of love and mercy.

This universal hope of the Jews does not in the least militate against their attachment to the country of their birth or that of their abode. The hope of the Jews for independence, both national and religious, does not in the least impair their obligation to obey the laws of their country, and to use every lawful means for its defence and support. For whilst we are in captivity our fortunes are bound up with those of our countrymen, and he is no true son of Israel who hates others for the sake of their belief, or who wishes to establish his own advantage to the injury of his neighbours, be their creed what it may.—It is not therefore from a feeling of bad citizenship that our hopes of a restoration to Palestine do spring, it is not

from bigotry that we ask of the Lord, that He may in mercy remember Zion, and re-establish there his worship as of old, and restore his holy temple on its ancient foundation. And let no one think, that this is an idle thing to pray for; inasmuch as the Lord must have some great end in view for which He has preserved our people during all their wanderings; and since He thought it of sufficient moment to redeem us in olden days, and to unite us as one people by the bestowal of a uniform law which should be the same for all its individuals, from the highest to the lowest: surely it is but arguing according to his infinite wisdom to presume, that what He established then, He meant to endure for everlasting. Now it is well known, that the union of our nation was severed at the division of the first kingdom of Israel, say at the commencement of the reign of Rehoboam, or at latest when Shalmenesser led away captive the ten tribes forming the division of Israel proper. But can it be supposed that the Lord was so short-sighted as to institute a union which was no union? surely to argue thus would be assuming an absurdity; if even we had not the writings of the prophets to assure us of the positive promises of God, which we know from analogy to be true and sure of a future fulfilment. We therefore are warranted in looking forward to a complete mingling together of all the discordant elements which now constitute the household of Jacob, at a time and in a manner which the wisdom of the Lord will choose.

Strong in this hope of a true fulfilment of God's covenant, of a recompense for faithful adherence to the truth, have the Israelites withstood for ages every

approach of the enemy from without, and have been upheld in their noble resistance by that grace from above which accompanies always those who humbly seek the truth. So well have they who sought to destroy our nationality been aware of the unshaken prop this hope gives to the Jew, that they have essayed everything to persuade him to believe in an alleged fulfilment of his hope, or have endeavoured to induce him to yield it as a matter of no moment. Through the blessing of the Guardian of Israel it has happened, that the torrents of blood which have been shed by the persecutors have not quenched the flame of our trust, that the multitudes who have turned their back, and fled from our ranks, and joined the forces of the oppressors, have not diminished materially the devoted bands who stand yet ready to watch in silent expectation "till cometh the day of the Lord, the great and fearful." And we need not fear that there ever will be a time, when Israel will be traitors to the hope of the salvation and the kingdom of their own adored Unity. Still there are men among us, if men I dare call them, persons who are teachers in Israel, but who unworthily fill the seat of honour, who have discovered that the Jew who enjoys civil liberty need not to pray for a restoration of the house of Israel as one; who fancy, that the bodily reign of the king Messiah is a problematic matter, on which persons are at liberty to speculate as upon other matters of doubt and uncertainty. These men style themselves reformers of our religion; they wish to alter the liturgy, or more correctly speaking, the form of prayer, to leave out if not all, at least many, allusions to the blessed kingdom to which we have looked for-

ward for so many centuries with hope and fear. Much dissension have these false shepherds produced in our ranks, if not even, thank God for his mercy! in our city, at least in several others; and well-nigh they threaten to break up the harmony which our people have always had among them by a uniform rule of interpreting the received covenant of God. It is true these men profess veneration for the ancient faith; they however entertain a wish to reform many an observance, and to alter at pleasure the rules which have governed our places of worship for ages before the destruction of the second temple. Without entering at present into a detailed argument on the subject, and to point out which things are really of importance, and which merely customs of no moment in our forms: we will merely lay down the universally acknowledged rule, that the uniform practice of the Israelites is binding upon the whole community, unless it could be proved that its institution is contrary to the law of Moses. In our day, we say it boldly, there is nothing to abridge: people have unfortunately already of their own accord left off many an observance legitimate and within the meaning of the letter of the law. How religion is to be reformed upon such a basis, exceeds my power of understanding; in place of retrenching, it ought to become the duty and study of teachers of religion to exhort the people to become stricter observants, and to approach more closely to the former standard of a religious life prevalent among us. Moreover, what was once universally practised, cannot arbitrarily be set aside by the action of a small body, acting independently of all others. The right has never been given to a few

persons unacquainted with the law and the ramification of the commandments, extending as they do into every branch of domestic and public life, to judge of the propriety or impropriety of any observance; or else we should soon behold the melancholy spectacle of as many reforms as there are Jewish congregations in the world. Above all things the doctrines of the church of God, the creed as deduced by our wise men from the law, are so to say, clauses of the inward covenant, which we have promised to observe and to obey; consequently every one teaching something in opposition thereto must be regarded as a traitor to the holy cause, which is no less that of all Israel conjointly, and every one of its individuals, than that of the Lord's own covenant. Whoever is then tinctured with any heresy on these important points, who doubts and expresses his opinions of the untruth of any of the fundamental principles, cannot, and of right should not, be received as a legitimate teacher for Israelites; and whatever may be alleged against the unenlightened zeal of old-fashioned Jews, they are much safer guides, as regards morals no less than doctrines and laws, than those of a modern date who endeavour to place our religion upon a footing which should approach nearer the standard of gentile worship, and be more sightly to the eye of those who do not thoroughly understand the principles on which our customs are founded.

In short, we must be very careful how we listen to arguments, which could by any contingency break up the oneness of Israel, which should cause our opponents to rejoice at seeing those divisions among us which have for ages been witnessed among themselves.

A perfect agreement on speculative matters is probably not attainable, it perhaps never existed, and was, it is possible, never designed to exist. But we should not let this consideration permit ourselves to branch off into the field of that sort of free inquiry, which finds every thing ancient stupid, and every new-fangled notion of a high degree of usefulness and beauty. The moderns, no doubt, have a vast superiority over the learned of former ages in the accessibility to a mass of information, which was to them a sealed book, or rather a prohibited region which they were not permitted to approach. Nevertheless, this does not elevate the learned of our own day to the level of the prophets, to whom, on several occasions, it was granted to permit certain acts, unlawful at others, but never to abrogate permanently any institution of biblical origin, much less a fundamental doctrine of our belief.—I will not say that there is not room for a few wholesome regulations of our places of worship, the abolishment of abuses which all deplore, the establishment of a regularity and the enforcement of a decorum which all pious Israelites desire. But these are regulations merely, and ask for no change of any portion of the established worship; they leave the prayer-book as it is, and as it has been in use for many centuries.—Let us then be cautious, how we listen to any overtures for changes which we might, nay would deplore, as soon as they are introduced, and let us unite as one man, to defend our faith just as we have received it, and exhort each other to fulfil the terms of the covenant, and to obey strictly all the words of the law. This is a reform of which we stand much in need, this is a restoration of the ancient piety which

the spirit of the age, alas! has caused to fall in decay; and by bringing about this result we shall surely acquire a better title to that of enlightened men, than by forcing through by dint of uninformed numbers such notions of reform, as have their birth in some sickly brain, perhaps more ambitious than wise.

Yes, brethren! listen to the voice of ages which has spoken peace to Israel, which has preserved us when every thing else fell into hopeless decay. You, who are wise in your humility, hearken to the words of instruction which the ancients of our race have spoken to us, and be convinced, that if they have erred, as all men must err, they erred out of the solicitude they bore for the truth which is in Israel, and that it would be acting suicidally, were you to reject the guidance of those who, under God, were his instruments to preserve that consistent revelation, which was proclaimed on this day before our forefathers, who stood worshipping in holy awe at the foot of the mountain on which rested the glory of God.

And Thou, Father! bless us also at this hour, and let us feel the full force of thy wisdom, which speaks in every word of the blessed law. Subdue the pride of our heart which would elevate itself above thy wisdom, and establish its imaginings as acceptable to Thee.—And do preserve the unity of thy household, and let our deliberations be guided by thy understanding, so that whatever we endeavour to teach or do, may redound to thy glory and the upholding of peace among the children of thy covenant, whom Thou didst redeem through thy might from the fiery furnace, even from Egypt. Amen.

[NOTE.—This address, as the date will show, was spoken before any of the new teachers who are now among us, had come to this country; but their course could readily be foreshadowed, as the intelligent reader will observe, from the acts of a few of like sentiments with them then here. The warning conveyed has lost none of its force by the events of the last twenty-four years. June, '27.]

Sivan 4th. } 5603.
June 2d. }

DISCOURSE III

CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL.

GUARDIAN of an only people! look down, we beseech Thee, from thy everlasting abode on those who fear thy name and hope for thy salvation. How long, O Lord, shall thy inheritance linger in the stranger's land? how long shall thy servants be subject to those who acknowledge not thy law? how long shall be desolate the land of promise, and waste the cities of Judea? Build, O build the walls of Jerusalem! raise up, O raise up the foundation of thy sacred house, where all Israel may assemble as one man, to adore Thee before the eyes of all the nations, that thy name may be glorified, and thy kingdom be acknowledged by all that have breath, and Thou be called One, as thou art truly the One Creator, the One Redeemer, even from the beginning until the sun shall shine no more, and this creation have vanished away and been renewed by thy will. Amen!

BRETHREN!

Isaiah, in his fortieth chapter, thus announces the consolation of Israel:

נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר אלהיכם : דברו על לב
ירושלם וקראו אליה כי מלאה צבאה כי נרצה עונה
כי לקחה מיד ה׳ כפלים בכל חטאתיה :

ישע׳ מ׳ א׳ ב׳:

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, will say your God. Speak consolation unto the heart of Jerusalem, and call unto her, that her appointed time is fulfilled, that her iniquity is atoned for; because she hath received from the hand of the Lord twofold for all her sins."

Let us endeavour to trace out the probable meaning of the prophet laid down in these words. In every discussion it is first requisite to find out the persons of whom the discourse treats, and, secondly, what it is that is announced; since it is evident that, if we do not know of whom and of what we speak, we can never arrive at a satisfactory and intelligible understanding on any subject.—Isaiah was, as we all know, an Israelite, living in a community of Israelites; his residence was at Jerusalem, near the palace of the kings of Judah, in whose times he lived. He worshipped and spoke in the name of the everlasting God, the acknowledged Divinity of Israel—He who was, who is, and who will be, and announced his message in conformity to the law which was looked upon as the code delivered unto his compatriots as a special gift of Heaven. When the prophet now says, "Comfort ye, my people," he speaks as the mes-

senger of the God whom we just mentioned, that some persons, be they who they may, are to speak words of comfort to the people of whom the prophet himself was one; since these only can be understood from the context under the term "My people," that is, the people of God. But to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding of the idea, he enlarges and amplifies the preceding word "people," by adding, "Speak consolation unto the heart of Jerusalem." Now, where was Jerusalem? evidently in Palestine. What is likely to be personified by it, since the prophet did naturally not mean so many streets and houses composing a city? evidently the persons who lived within those streets and houses composing the outward Jerusalem. Who, again, were they who lived in these streets and houses when Isaiah spoke? the descendants of Jacob whom the Lord had called Israel and Yeshurun, a people yet in existence at this very day, under the name of Jews, Israelites, or Hebrews. If Isaiah had meant to convey any other nation, he would have defined it by some other name than Jerusalem, for fear of being misunderstood; but in this instance the prophecy appears so distinct, so free from ambiguity, that a common sense view can only detect the people spoken of among the inhabitants of the actual Jerusalem in the days of the prophet, who were, as all the world knows, no other than the predecessors of the modern Jews.—We know well enough that persons who are not descended from the stock of Israel have alleged, that the text alludes to a spiritual Jerusalem, and a spiritual people of God; but with all their ingenuity they must at last admit, that "my people" is defined by the usual application

it receives in other parts of Scripture, and that "Jerusalem" is to be explained by the same holy standard. Now, let us turn to some texts anterior to Isaiah. It was said to Abram (Gen. xii. 2): "And I will make thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make great thy name, and thou shalt be a blessing." Here a nation is spoken of, through the existence of which Abram, as he was then called, should become a blessing to all the families of the earth. And when Abram was yet childless, at an advanced age, we read (Ibid. xv. 2–4): "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is my heir. And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This one shall not be thy heir; but he that shall come forth out of thy own bowels shall be thy heir." Again, on another occasion (Ibid. xvii. 21): "But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this time in the next year." (Ibid. xxi. 12): "For in Isaac shall thy seed be called." To Isaac it was said (Ibid. xxvi. 3, 4): "Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee and bless thee; for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will fulfil the oath which I swore unto Abraham, thy father; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." When blessing Jacob, his father said (Ibid. xxviii. 3, 4): "And God Almighty bless thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give unto thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee." This blessing was confirmed in a vision

immediately after to its recipient when he had left his father's house (Ibid. 13, 14): "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham, thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Near the close of Jacob's life the promise was repeated in the following words (Ibid. xlvi. 31): "I am the God, the God of thy father, fear not to go down to Egypt, for I will there make of thee a great nation." So far as regards predictions to the three great ancestors of the Jewish ra e. First Abraham, he had several sons; still the great nation was to be only from Isaac. Next Isaac, he had two sons; yet the blessing of Abraham was only conferred on Jacob. And lastly, Jacob was promised that all his family should be equally included in the peculiar protection of the Deity, and that all should be a blessing to the nations of the earth.—If we now descend to later times, we shall have some more elucidation of the term "my people." We read in Exodus iii. 6, when the Lord sent Moses on his first mission: "Moreover, He said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And continues in v. 7: "I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters." As if this were not enough, Moses was soon after told (Ibid. iv. 22, 23): "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, my first born; and I have said unto thee, Let my son go that he may serve me;

and if thou refusest to let him go, behold I will slay thy first born son." Again (Ibid. vi. 7): "And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be your God." Ibid. vii. 4: "But Pharaoh will not hearken unto you, and I will lay my hand on Egypt, and bring forth my armies, my people, the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by means of great judgments." When the redemption here indicated had been accomplished, and God wished to manifest his glory, He sent the following promise to the people of Israel: "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." And when they had sinned and worshipped an idol instead of the eternal Glory, we nevertheless read (Ibid. xxxii. 14): "And the Lord bethought himself of the evil which He had thought to do unto *his* people." We could multiply texts to exhibit beyond the remotest doubt that throughout the Bible the same class of persons is designated by the terms "my people," "God's children," as by the other terms, "sons of Israel," "children of Jacob," "Yeshurun," "the children of Abraham," "the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." In interpreting, therefore, any passage in which any of these or similar terms are found, we must be convinced from the uniformity of the language of Scripture, that the bodily descendants of Israel are understood, and if the event spoken of be one which was to happen to those who were to come after the speaker's immediate time, we must conclude farther that the prophets, or the writers of the predictions, looked forward to lineal descendants from their own contemporary Israelites, who were then designated also as the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, these being respectively the

names of the country and the capital where these people lived and dwelt. To understand by Jerusalem in the same manner any thing else than the veritable capital of Palestine, would suppose that there were a standard of explanation different from what the contemporaries of the prophets possessed. Yet if we search the whole Scriptures, we shall not discover a single trace that the people who inhabited Jerusalem ever dreamed that its name imported any thing beyond their own beautiful city, and when, therefore, something was asserted of this name, they naturally could apply it only to the streets and houses which composed their chief city, or metaphorically to its inhabitants and their descendants.

In this connexion permit me to call your attention to the unfairness of the translators of the Bible in the English language in placing headings over the chapters and pages which are not warranted by the context. Independently of occasional erroneous views of the text which were transfused honestly, we will admit, into their version, though it is singular enough that these errors usually occur where some peculiar doctrine is to be favoured: the learned divines who furnished us with what is styled the common English version undertook, without the remotest shadow of right, to place headings, as they are called, over the commencement of every chapter in the whole Scriptures, which the uninformed are but too apt to take for a translation of a part of the original. Now, the first inspection of the Hebrew Bible presents no superscriptions of the chapters and pages, and this should then satisfy us that the whole of these annotations are without any, even the smallest authority. Yet it is

but too true that many an error has been fostered and called into life by these arbitrary annotations of the English translators, who, for reasons best known to themselves, endeavoured to make it appear that the Bible furnished evidence, of one sort or another, for their peculiar religious views. And when any one denies the deduction which the Nazarene world draws from the Bible, because the words of Scripture do not say what is alleged of them: he is referred to the headings, which clearly point out the forced construction. Were it that all our people, men, women, and children, could read the word of God in its original text, this evil would be of small moment; but unfortunately there are thousands who have no knowledge of religion except what they obtain through means of translations furnished by gentiles, a knowledge highly valuable in itself, and in the absence of more accurate information, ardently to be desired: still it may become cause of error, because people so situated have no means of knowing what is purely scriptural and what is not. A translation conducted throughout by Jews, honest and unbiassed in favour of one unscriptural system or the other, might in a measure remedy the evil: yet even here there would be room for error, a defect to which our best intended endeavours are constantly exposed. But now no such Jewish Bible in the English language does exist, though it is to be hoped this evil will not be always a reproach to us; yet whilst it exists we must not omit to caution the unwary against the poison which they may insensibly imbibe from a work, which ought to present nothing but the unadulterated word of God. Let it then be understood that no notes, marginal

references, or head-lines, are part and parcel of Scripture, but merely the additions of uninspired men, which may or may not be true, and can have, therefore, no farther authority than what probability or the context gives them. When we now inspect an English Bible with its notes and headings, it is quite an argument not only in favour of the truth of Nazarene doctrines in general, but also of one or more peculiar sects in particular, for no other reason than that the translators belonged to these divisions, and found it convenient to give strength to their received notions by the aid of forced constructions. We are not going to enter this day upon a review of the English Bible; but merely to state general facts, and we will rest the proof of what we have advanced upon the general notoriety of its truth. But if we discard the superfluous human additions to the Word, even taking the translation as it stands, the unbiassed reader will not find the support in favour of doctrines opposed to Judaism for which a biblical warrant is so largely claimed; since the words themselves, as they read in the translation, do not bear the construction which a forced application, such as is presented in the various notes and comments, has given to them.

What I have just been saying may appear tiresome and irrelevant to our subject; but you will see the propriety, nay, the necessity thereof, if you merely take in your hands the common version, and see the heading upon any Bible text, and especially upon the one we have taken for to-day's discussion. The heading is in these words: "1. The promulgation of the gospel. 3. The preaching of John Baptist;" and the pages are headed, "The promulgation of the

gospel." I refer you to the book itself for the continuation of the contents of the chapter forty of Isaiah according to the Anglican church, and will merely limit myself, for brevity's sake, to the part quoted. Our text is: "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, will say your God. Speak consolation unto the heart of Jerusalem," &c. But what is understood by the gospel? The annunciation of the creed of the gentile Nazarenes, which took place at the eve of the downfall of our home and temple under the assaults of the Romans. We have exhibited what is meant by "my people;" they were those who were to be comforted, and no other person or persons can be substituted in their place. Now, if the promulgation of the gospel could be meant, which took place not to the Jews, but to their destroyers, the words ought to have been: "Comfort ye the enemies of my people, will say the God who hath rejected Israel;" since the downfall of Israel by the building up of the gentile world must presuppose, that the former are no longer the peculiar and chosen people. Now the prophet speaks in the future, not as the English version has it, "saith," but "will say your God." It evidently means, now, that the comforting, whatever be understood thereby, was not to take place immediately, but at a distant day, a future at least till after the death of the prophet; for he clearly announced a dispersion of the people of God, at least those whom he called so, and saw the partial fulfilment of the denunciation. To this people, sinning at the time of the prophecy, is applied, at a future period, the name of "my people," and the Deity calls himself in reference to them, "your God." If, now, the heading of the English Bible could be

true at all, it would be requisite that the gospel, a term well enough understood by us at the present day, must have been announced to the Israelites at its first promulgation, and as "comfort" is attached to the message, it needs must have been one which the people received as a consolation and happy tidings from their God. But nothing of the kind do our opponents allege to have occurred, and I refer to them, because our own history is silent on the subject. The followers of the Nazarene say, that he appeared at a period of great distress among those whom Isaiah calls, in the name of God, "my people," that he and his disciples addressed the identical gospel to them upon every possible occasion, and that neither were the Jews comforted by this message, nor were they continued as "God's people;" for they rejected the gospel and its adherents, and their national glory was cast down into the dust, and the goodness of God was especially bestowed upon the followers of the gospel, which according to the text ought to have been a comfort to the nation of whom Isaiah was one.—But we contend that, unless there be an error in the definition we have given to the words "my people," and "Jerusalem," the heading of the common version is totally erroneous and untenable, and the pretended accomplishment on foreign nations totally at variance with the evident signification of the very words employed by the translators of the Bible. Yet this is but one of many misstatements and forced constructions which are daily presented to our acceptance; and despite of their palpable weakness, great astonishment is manifested that we Jews should be so blinded, as not to see what is not to be seen, and to

refuse accepting as fact what common sense compels us to say is neither founded in reason nor consonant with Scripture.

The nature of a public address does not permit us to dwell any longer on this part of our subject, and we must turn to the second point of our inquiry: "What is the nature of the announcement which the prophet makes to the people of Israel, whom we have proved to be the intended recipients of the promised blessing?" Let the words speak for themselves. We know that all the threatenings of evil unto Israel for disobedience came through the prophets whom God sent to speak in his name; and now, when a change is announced as impending, the same persons are called upon to speak in a different language; and therefore says the text: When the time shall come for the termination of the sorrows and tribulations which followed each other thick and fast during centuries of transgression, the spirit of God will tell his faithful messengers to speak no longer of woe, and sorrow, and destruction, but to address comfort to the hearts that have mourned so long; to assure them that the punishment was not an evidence of rejection from his grace, but an earnest, an evidence, that their God was watching their iniquity, and visited them with the rod of correction, in order only that their transgression might be atoned for, agreeably to his attributes of mercy which, whilst guaranteeing leniency and a long withholding of wrath, at the same time warn us not to rely upon long indulgence with the idea of impunity. And should the people say, "We have suffered more than any other nation, we have been scourged for our faith, scorned

for our hopes, spurned because we bore the name of Israel:" they will be referred to their terrible sins, to their stubbornness, which would not listen to all the warnings full of love and compassion which were addressed to them during their days of prosperity, morning and evening, by those whose wisdom and deep insight into futurity proved them to have been inspired by the Supreme Wisdom, and armed with fortitude by the power of the Almighty; and they will be told that these messengers they scorned, these prophets they slew, these seërs they scourged and cast into loathsome dungeons. Was it not meet then that similar trials should befall the people whilst they remained rebellious? and what more fitting instruments could the Lord choose than the arms of the gentiles, who had not known his name, and had not learned of his law? But with the accomplishment of the deserved retribution, the goodness of the Lord will return and visit Jerusalem with his favour, and its inhabitants and those who spring from them with his mercy; and this is the comfort which is to be breathed into their hearts, this the trust which is to animate their souls.—And farther says the Spirit: "A voice cries in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make level in the desert a highway for our God." Needs God a highway for his own purposes? Not He, but they whom He will bring together from the ends of the earth; they will hasten over hills and valleys, through inhabited lands and deserts, over continents and seas, to crowd together into the deserted streets of Jerusalem, into the waste places of Palestine, so that in every city and hamlet of Judæa the joyful exclamation will resound: "Here,

behold your God!" What does this announcement mean? is it a spiritual thing? a quasi reign of peace? a cessation of strife? the prevalence of liberality? of freedom from religious persecutions from gentile masters? If this had been the intention of the Spirit, He would so have announced it: "Behold, a time will come when you, my people, shall be driven from your land and live strangers in countries not yet known, in islands not yet discovered. You will for many years be hated; your belief in one God will expose you to many persecutions; but you shall not be consumed; for a time will come when no one shall persecute the other for opinion's sake, peace shall be every where prevailing, and you, children of Israel, shall then live among the nations peacefully and securely, you shall have temples every where, and be treated as citizens in every country where you may live; you shall forget Jerusalem, and no longer sigh for its desolation; because the whole world shall be your Palestine, every city your Zion, and every Synagogue your temple." We maintain that, were the consolation merely the spiritual restoration, the Bible would have so expressed it; the prophets were not so poor in language, nor the Spirit so short in knowledge, but that there were ample means to have declared the future after the manner we have indicated, as easily as the reverse has been done. It is unfortunate for us, that there are men who are ashamed of the singularity of the Jewish belief, as they have received it from their fathers; they fancy that it is not an evidence of enlightenment to look forward to a Jewish country, to be governed by Jewish laws. They believe that they must bring the sacrifice of

their hopes of future glory as an acceptable offering to the countries of their sojourning. But how short-sighted are such men! they gain nothing in the esteem of the gentiles by their denial of their hopes in a glorious restoration, and they draw down on themselves the wrath of Heaven for their daring unbelief. Do they really think that an enlightened, liberal man, who is no Israelite, does not see that these new doubts, sprung up in the course of a few years of ease, enjoyed in a few countries where not a twentieth part of all Israel resides, are another exemplification of the truth of Moses, who said, "And Yeshurun grew fat and kicked?" Do they imagine that it is a blessing to collective Israel that they are scattered all over the world, citizens in a few towns, tolerated in a few more, and spurned in nearly every other place of their sojourn? Do they think that for such a purpose God redeemed us from slavery, wrought so many miracles to preserve us amidst persecutions, that at length we might play, so to say, a secondary part in a state of universal peace, an insignificant handful in every spot amidst the peaceful reign of liberal principles, of a qualified adoption of the law of Moses? Do they really imagine that the Searcher of hearts sees not the unbelief that is in their spirit, their anxiety to escape from the burden of religion by their spiritualizing the text of Scripture to suit their notions of truth and futurity? Woe, woe! that such men should be numbered in Israel! woe to the day that they have raised their head in rebellion against the Lord and his anointed! But their counsel cannot prevail! Israel will rise above these doubts and fears; but in the meantime the affections are estranged, and dis-

sensions are sown in the midst of our families, and divisions, fearful and sinful, fill with dismay the lover of his God and of the welfare of his people. Yet the Lord will protect his flock against this danger too. He who arrested the sword when it flashed in the light of the rising sun, and was not sated with slaughter when the moon slowly ascended in the eastern horizon, will in his infinite mercy avert this cup of sorrow from our lips, and suffer not the harmony of Israel to be broken up by means of the artful errors which the unthinking wish to propagate.

No, brethren! the prophets speak of a literal Jerusalem, of a bodily assembling of the scattered outcasts of Judah; and they mean these ideas only, or else they would have used different language, which was amply at their command. A spiritual regeneration of the sons of Jacob, and a reign of universal peace (of which more on another occasion) are to a certainty included in the predictions; but this does not say that the accomplishment of these things is not to be effected in the bodily Jerusalem, at the very temple on Moriah, by the very personage whom we hope for, the Messiah David, the son of David ben Yishai from Bethlehem. Ay, we doubt; the day is too far distant for us? we are tired of waiting? But, says Isaiah: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God will stand for ever." Truly the earth will put on her mantle of green when the early spring wakes nature again into life; the flowers will enamel the meadows, and the blossoms will deck with beauty the trees of the

field, when the sun acquires strength in his progress towards summer; but again the storm blows with its hot breath over the landscape, and withered is the grass, and faded is the flower; and man, too, will bloom in infancy, and shoot up into manhood, and bear fruit and prosper in his works; but age creeps over him, his frame sickens, his limbs quiver under the weight of years, and his spirit flies from him, and the sod of the valley covers his frame, and the worm becomes his associate. Yet with all this the WORD of God neither fades nor withers; it sees changes of seasons and of centuries pass along in rapid succession; but it awaits the sure fulfilment which the mind of the Supreme has assigned for its triumphant establishment, for its indestructible rule over the destinies of man. And has not our history proved to us that God is true and his word abiding forever? Therefore do we hope, and look forward with prayer and longing to the hour when the glory of God shall appear, and all flesh see that his mouth has spoken it.

Equally erroneous with the spiritualizing of doubting Jews is the view of the Nazarenes, who apply the verse "A voice crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord" to the person known in their history as John the Baptist. This is the first time in my lectures that I have ever spoken directly of the characters of the Nazarene faith, but it is unavoidable in our present elucidation of Scripture. He called himself "the voice of one crying in the wilderness," as the Nazarene records say; but this certainly is not a satisfactory fulfilment of the passage under discussion. It is not correct to render the passage "the voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," because

קול is the nominative to the verb קרא, and therefore means, "A voice crieth in the wilderness," the objective case follows in the words, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord;" that is, the voice of God, in prophecy, calls out to the world to make ready a passage for the redeemed and comforted sons of Jerusalem to appear again before their God, to worship Him in their ancient limits as of old; for they only require a highway in the desert to return to their former dwelling-places, which are, as the vision continues, to be filled with worshippers, of whom it can be said, "Behold, here is your God." It is evident that with the voice crying in the wilderness there must be a rebuilding of Judea's cities. But was this the case when John appeared, granting that there lived such a man? No; soon after the land became a prey to hosts of enemies that broke down the glory of Israel. And since then?—O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! waste are thy palaces, ruined are thy gates, and thy temple is a desolation! Cities of Judah! cities of Judah! your joy is gone! the grass grows in your avenues, and thorns climb over your sunken habitations! Your water-courses are choked by the sand of the desert, and destruction frowns triumphant over your battlements! Sons of Israel! sons of Israel! ye wander in every land, ye are strangers in every clime! ye are a byword to the gentiles who know not your God! your heart is heavy, and vain now are your breathings for help that has not come. But rouse thee, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thy God will come in his might; rejoice, ye cities of Judah, for your Restorer has spoken; confide, ye sons of Israel, for your Redeemer comes, his reward is with Him, and his recom-

pense before Him. Long have ye hoped for his coming; long have the wastes desired his salvation; and behold it has come to pass what He has foretold, and peace dwells within our land, rejoicing and salvation abide in our palaces.

It is therefore refreshing that in every year, in every land, in every town, they assemble to fast and pray who in their hearts are mourners for Zion; and well do ye act, brothers in exile, brothers in hope! to ask for joy only in the restoration of your holy faith on its ancient foundation, and surely the Lord will reward your confiding trust; and may He give you, and all those who await his coming, glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the robe of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness, and may you be called the Trees of righteousness, the Plantation of the Lord, that He may be glorified. Amen.

Ab 15.
Aug. 11. } 5603.

DISCOURSE IV.

BIBLE DUTIES.

O God our Father! how long have the dark clouds of affliction rested on thy people. Centuries have elapsed since we were a united nation, and ages have vanished since one chief ruled over us all. But in all our sorrows thy light shone brightly above us, and in the absence of an earthly head, Thou, O almighty

One! wert our Chief and King. How glorious is this thought! we, the mortal, corrupt children of clay, are the special object of thy providence; and Thou, the unending, incorruptible and holy God, art the Sovereign of this earthly kingdom. Grant then that we may be truly sensible of this glorious destiny, to feel that, though members of the states in which we live, we are nevertheless special subjects in thy heavenly kingdom, priests in thy own holy temple, destined to fulfil thy will, to accomplish the mission which thy wisdom has assigned unto our remotest descendants. Give us strength therefore to withstand the trials of life which everywhere surround us, and keep us unconsumed before Thee, even until that hopeful day when Thou wilt send thy servant David to restore peace on earth, and to bring all mankind as worshippers before the footstool of thy glory. Amen.

Brethren!

The Bible, as we all acknowledge, contains the revealed word of God, by the tenor of which all believers profess to frame their thoughts and to shape their course of life. In these points are all agreed, that religious belief is only founded on Scripture, and that religious conduct can have its source only in the same pure fountain. Nevertheless, if we watch the children of men in their conversation and conduct, I speak of those who profess to be pious, we must be amazed and grieved at the contrariety of views which they base upon the same record of revelation, as though the same words could afford just warranty for opposite interpretations. It is therefore evident that something else than the mere words of the Bible

come into play whenever one sits down to the perusal of its pages, and this something is the prejudice of education, aided not rarely by the war of human passions. We will merely state, that from the moment our mind begins its operations of thinking and framing ideas, it is exposed to a thousand disturbing causes which all more or less leave their impress upon the pure page of the human soul. Whatever is transacted without us, forms an image within, which we carry unconsciously about us, and afterwards colour it by any new lights which one after the other are presented to our eyes. And whenever our feelings become enlisted in favour of this coloured image, which we have, as we fain would believe, created ourselves, we lose sight of the fact that we might perchance have created a fiction, and endowed it with the habiliments of truth, and believe therefore that we alone are correct in our preconceived opinions, and everybody equally wrong in what he alleges. It is perhaps a happy thing for mankind, as they are constituted, that each one finds a species of happiness in the fabric which he has been taught to erect; nevertheless it cannot be denied, that every one of the peculiar notions which each individual of the great mass entertains cannot at one and the same time be based upon simple truth, or the immutable divine standard of uniformity in all its parts, upon every occasion, at every season, and under all circumstances.—People in this manner are induced to adopt certain ideas, and to receive as conclusive certain arguments which are advanced to fortify these ideas. But very little opportunity for doubt is presented; because few ever are admitted who repudiate these

views among them; and if peradventure this last does occur, then are passions excited, angry feelings called into play, and the chances of conviction on both sides are extremely small, if not totally out of the question. Every disputant has a species of property in the position which he advances; something of credit to lose by having been imposed upon in his former habits of thought; and he thus refuses to listen to anything alleged in opposition to them, not to mention, to be convinced by the opposite side.—Moreover, there is a pride of intellect, a wrapping up of one's self in his own importance, which counsels us to look with contempt upon every proposition which does not emanate from ourselves, or to which at least we have not given our assent; and if we are appealed to, to listen, to ponder and to weigh, we shut both our eyes, for fear a single solitary ray of light should disturb the equilibrium of our composure, and cause us the trouble to remodel our mental structure, or add to or diminish from what we have been vaunting of as unimprovable. A man, when he alters his opinions, confesses at once that for a greater or less duration of time he has been deceived by others or been the dupe of his own conceit; and therefore he must exert no ordinary share of fortitude, before he can arrive at that important point to admit any degree of reasonableness in the views of others, even granting that he gets an opportunity, which many do not in their whole life, to compare his mode of thought with the standard which governs other beings who like him have received an intelligent spirit.

The above is one reason why there is such a diversity of views among Bible readers. All have not

been educated alike, and all are not intelligent alike. To some, therefore, who have received no religious training, and who have been left with no other guide than what their unassisted intellect furnishes them with, the Scriptures present no intelligible course of doctrines, nor a regular code of law. They feel that there is something in them, and here and there they contrive to snatch up something out of the unfathomable depth of truth which is the spirit of the Word. But at best their search is painful, and their mind distracted by the contending opinions which so many around them entertain. Hence it results that the interpretation which they arrive at is strangely deformed, in the eyes of him who has from early infancy been trained by religious parents, and taught to follow a certain course of life marked out by the text of the Bible.

Another believer belongs to a class of persons who have been educated religiously, but with many peculiar ideas which the teachers themselves have inherited from their fathers, who, knowing nothing better, have sought to fortify their positions by proofs drawn from that text-book which they venerate as divine. The person who is thus situated may be perfectly sincere and conscientious, and you must not consider his astonishment feigned, should he express surprise at your believing sincerely the dogmas of Judaism, which he thinks he has ample reason to suppose as long since set aside by a new species of legislation, although this very legislation presents not a single tangible new feature essentially or usefully differing from the evident text of the Mosaic code. He has been taught in a different school from the one in

which Israelites are reared; he sees in the plain language of the Bible a secondary meaning, and a typical explanation supplies him with means to prove something more than the very words employed would seem to warrant. But see you not, that his obstinate perseverance in this method of arguing does only prove that he sees, with a peculiarity of his own, foreshadowings in the word of God which are not evident to you? that this obliquity is the effect of a long training, of a onesidedness in his education which he has no means of correcting? Now suppose that you even stagger him in argument, that you prove to your satisfaction at least that he has nothing to reply to your powerful reasoning based upon the evident signification of the Bible: do not be angry with him if he does not yield to your earnest appeal to embrace your views; for conviction is a fruit of slow growth, and only when it has conquered the heart step by step, can its empire be said to be firmly established. And it may be also, that, what you have quite clear in your mind, you may have failed to communicate with equal clearness to another: how then can you expect that he should yield to you his long-cherished opinions? Or perhaps you attach different meanings to the same words, whilst in substance you are agreed: how then can you come to any mutual understanding, till you have settled the premises of your discourse?

Another, again, who also believes in the Bible, has perhaps in early youth been guilty of some indiscretion, or has, though originally carefully instructed, held in after-life much converse with persons who have peculiar, and as we would term them, erroneous

views of religion. In the first case he perhaps honestly endeavours to reconcile the word of the Bible with his own conduct, since he feels a sort of shame to confess himself condemned by the Source of truth; hence may result a certain bias to see in the Bible a permission for acts or a warrant for opinions, which the unburdened conscience could never discover therein. In the second case the person who advances the opinions opposed to our views may be truly an object of pity. He is perchance a seeker after truth, and has become perplexed by the appeals of his associates; he does not feel that he ought to doubt their sincerity, or suspect their piety; and still he sees that they differ materially from what he has been taught. Now he cannot embrace their ideas, for that would be rejecting the instruction which he really believes in; but he strives to reconcile the contending opinions, and imagines perhaps that he has succeeded in removing by his intellectual power the spiritual barrier which divides mankind. Is it then to be wondered at that he strains his mental vision, and fancies that he sees what no one else can see? And thus any absurdity which he may be guilty of must be set down to his believing himself equal to a task which is beyond the power of man to achieve. Diversity of opinions has existed from the beginning; and he therefore who attempts the reconciliation of all men by adopting a portion of the thoughts of each, must labour in a hopeless task, unless it were given to him to change the nature of man, and to prescribe new laws of thought, as well as new theories in thinking.

What we have been saying, so briefly and imperfectly, must convince the thinker, that the difference

of conclusions arrived at by the readers of Scripture does not argue that there is any ambiguity or inherent defectiveness in the words themselves, but that the evil has its source in the weakness of the human passions and the faults of early education, and associating with persons of divers views in maturer years. The heathen who never heard of the Decalogue can have no veneration for the sublime constitution of Moses of which he has no knowledge; the Moslem will scorn any one who presumes to contradict the Koran; equally so however will the Nazarene condemn the Israelite who sees not in the history of the founder of his religion the Messiah of the prophets, and finds not the plurality of the Deity hinted at in the words of the law; so also will the uneducated Hebrew smile at what he thinks the superstition of his fellow-Israelites, who see a warrant for their peculiar conduct to which he, in his ignorance, attaches quite a different signification. But all these classes of persons must permit us believing Israelites to claim the same right they exercise, that is, to abide by that interpretation of the Bible which we have received from our fathers. We have no interest whatever, save the cause of truth, in maintaining the peculiar position which we occupy, and even granting that our views are erroneous, they deserve to be treated with the respect which the honest opinions of a large number of intelligent persons demand from every man of candour and common sense. The taunts and ridicule with which we have heard our principles treated can affect only the nervous and superficial who, not being sufficiently versed in what it behoves them to know, have a horror of appearing singular

in the eyes of the multitude; but these weapons are directed with a harmless result against the armour which a sound instruction and a deep-seated faith throw around the sincere believer; for he feels that his thoughts are guided and his actions directed by the only true revelation which emanated from the universal Love which rules all mankind. I do not mean to say, that there may not be some excrescences, some parasitic plants, so to say, which have in the lapse of centuries gradually entwined themselves around the tree of our faith, the tree of knowledge of what the Lord declared good or evil; I do not wish to say that superstitious notions have not seized upon our people equally with other nations of the earth; but what have these admissions to do with the main question? is every thing superstition because a few, or if you will, many observances of no value have crept in by degrees? The superficial, who has just cast one glimpse into the treasury of knowledge, argues very often as though he had exhausted the fountains of wisdom: his mind is made up, he has no more to learn. Such a one looks in upon the Israelite as he stands in the early hour of the day in an humble posture before his God, his form enveloped in "the garment of fringes," his head crowned with the word of the covenant, and the testimony of the law wound around his arm. He suppresses not the laugh of derision, and he thinks that he has uttered a wise thing when he says: "Look at the superstitious old-fashioned Jew! he reads prayers in an unknown tongue, and puts on an outlandish sort of dress of which the Bible knew nothing." But, worthy friend, we have a word in reply. The Jew should *only* be old-fash-

ioned; his religion bears date before the light of civilization was scattered over the western portion of the old world; before one even knew that there was a continent beyond the great waters. It was at such a time that a law was given him which was to be uniformly the same, unchanged by time or the mutations of fashion; and behold he has preserved it in the very words in which it was written, and now offers it at this distant day to the admiration of the nations of the world, for their guidance and for their acceptance. Do you wonder that he loves this law? that it is to him the life of his life? the soul of his soul? Sooner could you ask the mother whether she loves the prattling boy who drew from her the first sustenance of life, and why she doats upon a being perishable and frail, than marvel at the constancy of the Hebrew to the heavenly gift which is immovable and undying in its nature, to which he gives not life and being, but which to him is the source of joy in his hours of happiness, and which sweetens to him his days of sorrow and affliction.—Whenever the morning dawns, and before he applies himself to the labour of the day, the pious Jew feels himself called upon to pour out his wishes before his God who has given him life and the law; and he prays in the manner and words which his forefathers made use of, and he addresses therefore the throne of Grace in the language of Heber, mindful of the sacredness of that tongue which was made in olden days the vehicle of the message of love to the sons of man. He moreover is a believer in the duties of religion; it matters not to him that he does not comprehend all the reasons wherefore every separate command were given; it is enough for

him that the law says that thus he should act, and he submits his intellect to the wisdom of the Most High, and allows himself to be guided by the decree of the Ancient of days. Now the law lays it down as a duty (Deut. xxii. 12):

גדלים תעשה לך על ארבע כנפות כסותך אשר תכסה בה : דבר' כב' יב' :

"Thou shalt make thyself fringes upon the four corners of thy garment wherewith thou coverest thyself."

All Israel from time immemorial has so understood this precept as we practise it at this very hour, and whoever then feels that he should hold true communion with his brothers in spirit, cannot do otherwise than pay obedience to the law as he has been taught it.—But not alone a blind duty is thereby obeyed. The Israelite turns to another portion of the law and sees the reason why the Lord instituted this precept. For so we read (Numb. xv. 37–41): "And the Lord said unto Moses as follows, Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them to make themselves fringes on the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringes of the borders a thread of blue. And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them; and that ye seek not after the inclinations of your hearts and the delight of your eyes, in pursuit of which ye have been led astray. In order that ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought

ye forth out of the land of Egypt to be your God; I am the Lord your God."—This text evidently says, that the Lord meant to institute a memorial unto the Israelite, by which he should always be reminded of his duty; it was necessary that this token should be a simple and cheap one, accessible at all times and to every person in the community; and hence He ordained four fringes on the corners of the garments with which we cover ourselves. He therefore, who is truly alive to his duty, always covers himself with the garment of fringes, especially during the time of prayer; for this is an hour of humiliation when the creature comes to submit himself to his Maker's will, when he approaches to confess his weakness without the aid from above, and without that undeserved grace for which he entreats the Giver of all good. It is thus he should stand to hold judgment over himself, to feel that to follow the dictates of an unregenerated heart and the bidding of lustful eyes, would be hurrying on in the path of perdition. He should then condemn himself for every act of disobedience with which he has burdened his conscience, and impress deeply on his mind that not only he, but also the whole people of Israel owe to God the debt of everlasting gratitude, for his having stretched forth his almighty hand when affliction bore heavily upon them, broke the yoke from off their neck, and led them forth triumphantly out of Egypt to the enjoyment of an everlasting freedom,—not that they might riot in luxury and live at ease in worldly glory, but that the Lord might be their God, that his name might alone be invoked by them, that He alone might be worshipped in all their generations, and that no

other being should be looked up to by them as God or Saviour! And all this train of feelings is to be called into action by the fastening of the fringes on the corners of our garments; and whenever we see them we shall feel that we have the burden of God's law resting upon our shoulders; for this very little token is a sign of the existence of the law. And as the very institution thereof exhibits the motive of its bestowal, we must be always impressed that we are indeed the chosen servants who are to be the witnesses of the Lord on earth, and to prove to all the world that He, who wrought signs and miracles to redeem our fathers from Egypt, is indeed the God of all flesh, the Creator of all spirits, to whom are due obedience, glory and honour from all mankind, from eternity unto eternity; inasmuch as He is God, and there is none beside Him.

The same reasoning holds good with the Tiphillin which we bind on our arm and forehead. The essential portions of them are extracts from the law of God, which contain the duty of consecration, of gratitude, love of the divine Being, obedience, and threatenings for disobedience, and promise of length of days for a fulfilment of duties.—No Israelite, who is correctly taught, regards them as superstitious charms, which are by an inherent power to protect him from evil; but they are to him objects of divine commands, and consequently matters of human duty. Still they have, besides the positive injunction, also a mystical reference, according to the opinion of the wise in Israel, to matters of high import, and they are types of the union of the people with their God, who, through means of obedience on our part, promises to let his

glory dwell in our midst, and to fill our soul with his heavenly light. To prove that this was the ruling idea of the ancients, whom the unwise not rarely charge with blind superstition, let the following, which is one of several prayers, prefatory to the laying of Tephillin, answer to our satisfaction:

"I now prepare my head and arm for the bearing of the Tephillin, in the name of the Unity, the holy blessed One, and his glory, in fear and love, to acknowledge as one, the name of the Everlasting One, blessed be He, in the name of all Israel.

"I now lay the Tephillin to fulfil the command of my Creator, as it is written in the law: 'And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thy eyes;' and with this I receive upon me his yoke and his kingdom; for his are the power and the government, to do in all the world according to his will, as He did in Egypt; and to Him do I devote my soul, heart, and brain, for He is one, and there is no second, nor is there a unity like unto his unity."

And in truth, it well becomes the mortal to appear thus before his God; to devote the early part of every day in humility and resignation to the holy One's will and power. Much have Israelites suffered for the upholding of that faith, the simplicity of which is a stumbling-block to the gentiles; many waters of bitterness have passed over their head, because they refused to mingle with the nations of the earth; much hatred and contempt were heaped upon them because, according to the words of the Bible, they believed themselves the chosen messengers of God on earth; it is therefore meet that they do not

omit to consecrate, daily, their body to the service of the Lord, to devote their mortal frame, if need be, to seal by a glorious death, the truth of a well-spent life, the sincerity of the faith which they profess, in order to prove to the world, that it is not an idle thing for which the Hebrews toil, that it is not worldly gain which unites them together; but that it is the unwavering faith in the Unity to which there is no second, that it is the knowledge that to this adorable Being are due the sole love and obedience of the people, which He redeemed from Egyptian slavery!

Do you, gentile friend, call this superstition? a useless observance of things not familiar to you? We acknowledge that these ceremonial ordinances were given to Israel only, as the word says, "for *their* generations;" to you, therefore, they have neither applicability nor meaning; but to the son of Jacob they are of vital importance, they are outward evidences whether he is willing to serve the Lord in small things, to prove thereby that his heart is true, to bring the sacrifice of the dearest, when the service of the great King should demand it.—It is easy to heap odium upon us by charging us with superstition; but before the rational and liberal inquirer does so, he ought to be well informed whether or not there may be truth in what he has not yet investigated. We too, could charge gentiles with superstition; their modes of thought are incomprehensible to us; their symbols are to us prohibited by the plain letter of the Bible; their notions of the Deity we cannot entertain, consistently with a common sense view of the doctrines of the Scripture: and still we should

be charged with illiberality, were we to call our neighbours superstitious for not agreeing with us in sentiment. Our symbols appear therefore of no importance to the stranger, because they are so very simple; our ceremonies are looked upon as useless, because there is so little to attract in them. But for this very reason do they bear to us the stamp of divine authority. With a book, a garment of fringes, and phylacteries in his possession, the Jew bears with him all the symbols of his faith; he needs not any outward token of expensive material or curious workmanship; and then these very symbols are the record of God's revelation, the offering of prayer according to the tradition of the righteous who have lived before us, together with the habiliments which the Bible ordains,—and thus he is armed, in knowledge, in hope, in faith, in deeds. Whenever sin presents itself to his mind he has the word with him to teach him righteousness, and has the commandment always present to check the dawning of transgression, and to remind him that his God watches over all his deeds. There is therefore spirituality enough to sanctify the act of devotion; and, as man is necessarily bound to outward objects, there is symbol enough to aid the inward promptings of his better genius, which counsels him to do good and eschew evil.

Unconsciously, I have been led along to expatiate on the external types of our religion to a greater length than I anticipated, and still without much more than merely commencing the discussion. It is now time that we return to the point from which we started, that is, the diversity of opinions concerning

the meaning of Scripture. It is evident that though there may be no evil resulting to us from any one's explaining the Bible as he may please, and I am one of those who maintain that it contains within itself its best exposition, for God's testimony is true, it refreshes the soul: still we must have an initiation in the opinions of Israel, before it will be safe for us to venture upon the extensive field of the researches which the record of revelation offers. We have seen that some regard not our ceremonies as ordained: still there is scarcely an informed Israelite who could honestly venture such an assertion; and even those gentiles who believe that originally the ceremonies were requisite, though they deem them so no longer, would not gainsay it. Whichever of these heresies occupies our mind in the beginning of our inquiries, would destroy all hopes of a union with the mass of Israel. It is therefore clearly the province of parents and teachers to expound the word of God to their charges, in the manner they have themselves obtained it, to transmit it to those who, after them, are to continue among the race of Jacob the truth as they have received it. It is possible that the younger branches will throw off the yoke, and strike out new ways of their own when they leave the paternal roof, or the school of instruction; but this is not to be considered by them for a moment; they must discharge their duty if they wish to be obedient, and let them leave the issue in the hands of Him who directs all for a wise and merciful end.—Let us then all unite to proclaim aloud the principles of the divine legislation; let us hold fast to the Word and the interpretation of our fathers, under the full conviction that in nearly every case

our expositions are the most natural and the most consonant with the genius of the legislation on Sinai. —Let us be of good courage in this labour of love; the indifference which now prevails concerning outward religion will not always continue; the clouds of unbelief will one day be pierced by the rays of the sun of righteousness; selfish grovelling for worldly gain will yield before long to a spirit of pursuit after God and his strength; and then will be the glorious day, when the fruit of early impressions will ripen to the delight of all; and then true faith and devout obedience, even in small matters, will unite their sisterly hands, and carry up the spirit of the faithful and devout as a worthy offering to the altar of the Most High, whose wisdom is unsearchable and whose goodness is never ending. Amen.

Elul 13th. } 5603.
Sept. 8th. }

DISCOURSE V.

REGENERATION.

FATHER of all! who art hidden from our sight, whilst thy eyes survey all nature, give us thy mercy in answer to our prayer, and cleanse us thoroughly from our iniquities. Well do we know that we have deserved thy indignation; because that we have wilfully sinned against thy ordinances; but receive us, O merciful One! in this dread hour when we come in thy

presence, not trusting in our righteousness but leaning upon thy grace which overshadows all. Remember that we are thy children, whom Thou hast sworn to preserve as the witnesses of thy power and glory. Do, then, not diminish our number in Thy wrath, and let to each individual shine thy light and thy truth. But should thy dread judgment require that retribution should overtake us: then arrest speedily the destroyer's hand, and stay the uplifted sword through thy loving-kindness which is everlasting; so that we may be taught to love thy mercy whilst we are made to feel thy power; so that we may be purified of our misdeeds, and stand before Thee in the glory of a new and regenerated life. Amen.

Brethren!

At a period of great lukewarmness and grievous transgression a messenger of the Most High spoke as follows in his name:

ארפא משובתם אהבם נדבה כי שב אפי ממנו:
הושע יד' ה':

"I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely; for my anger is turned away from them." Hosea xiv. 5.

The people of Israel had at the time when this joyful hope for the sinner was announced to them, forsaken the covenant and gone astray after the idols and abominations of the gentiles, casting off the sweet burden of the law of their God and Father. The wrath which they had braved so long with apparent impunity had at length been enkindled, and it tore up piece by piece the foundation of their state and

their temple, of that state which was established only on the basis of righteousness, and of that temple, the walls of which were cemented by obedience only and a sincere faith in God. And now the sword was about to be drawn from its scabbard, and it was not again to be sheathed till it had accomplished its mission of woe and sorrow, and swept off the state of Israel from among the nations and levelled with the earth the house of glory; because the state had degenerated from its high purport of a missionary of goodness to the sons of man, and because the sanctuary and altar had become defiled by the presence of those who defied the vengeance of Him who dwelled among them between the wings of the cherubim. In other words, disobedience and its concomitant SIN had incensed the all-watching Justice, and retribution claimed the victim which had revelled in thoughtless security.—And fearful was the vengeance when it came; it was not the overwhelming torrent which engulfed other nations in the pool of darkness and oblivion, but that constant pursuit of the doomed which reached the individuals as well as the mass, which haunted their steps in every walk of life, in every portion of God's earth, and which to this day still follows in the wake of their descendants to claim its right, whenever they foolishly dare to forget their allegiance to their heavenly King.

It was at a time when sinning was at its height, and when the wrath was about being poured forth, that the prophet saw behind the dark masses, which were to obscure our light for many centuries of desolation, the rays of divine mercy again illumining the night of affliction, dispelling the mists which had so

long shrouded our glory, bringing peace to the spirits which had sorrowed so long.—By what means, now, does the seër propose to effect this hopeful restoration to favour? Does he tell the people that they must embrace new ideas? pursue new paths? acknowledge other masters? worship new gods?—O no, these are the very sins which the Israelites were then pursuing; they had mingled with the truths of religion views borrowed from the idolatrous heathens; they had long been following gentile habits engendered by a love of change; they had thrown off their allegiance to the house of David; and in addition to the One Supreme, they worshipped the deities which their uninstructed neighbours feared. Not this, therefore, was to be done by them to be loved freely of their God; but they were bidden in tones of affection, שובה ישראל עד ה' אלהיך "Return, O Israel, even unto the Lord thy God;" they had departed widely from the road which leads to heaven, they had swerved unto by-paths and been entangled in the pitfalls of unbelief and faithlessness; their transgressions had piled up, as it were, mountain-high obstructions in their way; every approach to goodness was seemingly barred to them, every ray of divine consolation was shut out by the dense canopy which iniquity places between man and his Creator. Yet, says the spirit, "Return, O Israel!" The labour may be arduous, in the beginning it may seem impossible; but never fear, Israel! halt in thy sinful journey, because the voice of thy God calls thee, He bids thee reflect, He wishes thee to recover from the mental malady which afflicts thy soul, even by retracing the steps which thou hast taken in the dominion of sin; since to the greatest evildoer there is

redemption promised, if he will but overleap the obstacles which his own misdeeds have placed in the way of his progress to salvation. "Return, O Israel! even unto the Lord thy God." However far the mercy of God may have been removed from thee by thy own misconduct, however insurmountable the obstacles may appear which stand between thee and the divine glory, press forward with good courage and unwavering faith, in the sure hope that thou wilt in this manner reach the goal of thy desire, even the presence of thy God, who will be ready to receive thee in his paternal embrace.—Let us notice the peculiar word "return;" the modern word repentance is not employed, which might signify that man should be sorry for the past, whilst he commences his labour of regeneration by a new path, just pointed out to him; but "return" is the word: this means a recurrence to the way which had been trod in the commencement of a pious career, which had been pursued, by the lights which had shone in days of old, by those whom the Lord calls his friends and servants. It is then in the pursuit of the ancient usages, as pointed out by God himself, that Israelites were told to return to the Lord their God; that is to say, as they had adopted new ideas in belief, they were to discard these altogether as erroneous and sinful, and adopt with a perfect sincerity and an entire singleness of heart the ancestral creed of the Lord our God being the Lord alone, since there is none beside Him who is Saviour and Redeemer. And as they had thought themselves authorized to leave out from the duties they had been taught to observe whatever they thought too burdensome or opposed to the standard of their own reason,

they should henceforward sedulously endeavour to observe and do whatever they had received as the law of God, justifying themselves only by obedience, heeding only the voice of instruction which had spoken to them from the summit of Mount Sinai, mindful only of the words of the covenant which had been announced to them from the midst of the terrors and the glory of the descent of the divine presence among the children of the dust. As they had also repudiated the earthly kingdom of the house of David, whom God had appointed to the rule over his people till the earth should be no more, they should return to their allegiance, rejecting all worldly glory which centred not in the chief of his people, under whose shadow they are to live among the nations, serving under him and with him the Eternal God, who remembers his covenant and his truth to all generations, even unto everlasting. And as, lastly, they had thought that they could not approach immediately the awful Majesty of heaven except through the mediation of beings superior to man, inferior only to the Creator, and had erected altars to a multitude of demons to whom sacrifices smoked in all the cities of Judah and Israel: they should at their time of repentance cling to the One alone, who is indivisible and unchangeable, who is near unto all who call upon Him in truth, who is great in kindness and pardons abundantly the children of his adorers.

The Israelites as a nation heeded not the words of the prophets; they continued to violate the covenant, to forsake the law, to incense the Lord by the deeds of their hands. The evil which they did not heed came over them, and proved to their obdurate hearts

that the end of sin is death. Still to this day the Spirit speaks unto our souls, and calls unto us to return to the safe fold of the law of God, to forsake the evil in our hands, and to purchase our eternal peace by faith and obedience. Let us not imagine that the length of time which has elapsed since the prophets of God walked among men has weakened the force of the truths which they announced; not so: the same God yet rules the earth, the same law yet exists as the emanation of his Wisdom. But also the same wrath yet burns which our forefathers caused to blaze forth against them. "Our fathers have sinned and are no more, and we bear their iniquities;" and we add to the flame by the pursuit of things which are an abomination to the Lord. Were it that man would be taught wisdom by others' experience, how zealous would we all be, as a matter of necessity, in the cause of our blessed religion. We have seen during the progress of our whole history that sinning is sure to be followed by punishment; we have at the same time received ideas the most refined of the nature of the Being whom all flesh adores, to whom every knee is bent, though called by various names by the different families of the earth; we have in our possession a law, the observance of which will produce good-will among the progeny of Adam, whilst it will, as we are promised, secure to us the undeserved favour of the Most High. And yet we are not wiser than our ancestors were in the days of Hosea. Men among us, women called by the name of Israel, have forsaken the covenant of Abraham, and refuse to seal the flesh of their offspring with that mysterious sign which the Lord himself instituted, when He blessed

Abraham as the father of a multitude of nations. There are among us those who join the schools of philosophy to invest the Deity, praised be his name, with attributes which our religion knows not. There are those who doubt of the truth of revelation, substituting their own puerile fancies for the words of life contained in the law. There are those who doubt the promises of the Lord, as though He could change or waver in his truth. There are those who profess to believe, yet violate habitually the sanctity of the Sabbath, seeking their own gain, instead of being sedulous in the service of their Maker. There are those who ask not for the restoration of the divine glory to Zion, but are content to mingle with the gentiles as though they were of the noble blood of Jacob's household. There are those who are ashamed of the name of Jew, and endeavour to hide their opinions by an outward aping of gentile customs and manners. In short, our community is contaminated by the iniquity of unbelief, by the boldness of open sin: and yet we wonder whether the mercy of God can be true, because it has not yet been revealed before our eyes? whether the Messiah is a creature of the imagination, simply because he has not yet appeared? But have we deserved to be taken again into favour? are we in a fit condition to be loved freely by God? what have we done to quench the anger which our misconduct and unbelief have provoked? It was in olden times the accursed love of money, of pleasure, and of power, which destroyed our temple twice and scattered us among the nations; and it is yet the same accursed love of money, of pleasure, and of power, which induces us to seek affinity with gentiles, to

adopt their customs, at times their religions, and which impels those who are even true to the name of Israel to turn traitors to the law. Ask we, why so many violate the Sabbath? it is the love of money, base money, which vanishes whilst the dazzled eye yet gloats upon the heaps of shining metal which men call wealth; for soon, alas! if it should abide with man in his earthly sojourn, he must leave it to those who laboured not for its acquisition, and who will dissipate it in the pursuit of low pleasures.—Another barters his soul literally for a dish of food, Esau-like, who sold his precious birthright for a mess of pottage; because he cannot resist the flesh of the swine or the savour of creeping things which the law forbids.—Another joins the communion of a gentile church, because the seductive bright eyes of beauty allure him from the humble fellowship of the synagogue. In what are these and many others like them distinguishable from those in Hosea's time who loved their idols? Do we imagine that before the impartial throne of eternal Justice there is any difference between gross and refined iniquity? No, surely not; and though the sinners may presume that Providence slumbers, they will discover, to their cost, like the workers of iniquity in Hosea's days, that it is vain in man to flatter himself with thoughts of impunity, but that the evil will come though it be slow in its approach. And all this time the non-fulfilment of the good which has been promised proves distinctly, that the pursuit of worldly things is not the way to win the favour of God, and to cause the walls of Zion to be built, and the Messiah to unfold his peaceful banner, to call all nations to worship at the same altar,

to invoke the same adorable and fearful Name, who released us from the bonds of bodily slavery. Besides this, though at this day we flatter ourselves that bloody persecutions have ceased, we are ever and anon admonished that the time of the redemption has not come; but that the more we endeavour to cast aside our ancient usages, the more we are always exposed to the malignity of those who love not Jacob's descendants. Does not all this prove that the words of God are true? that whilst we sin, we shall be punished? that whilst we forsake Him, his face will be hidden from us? that his mercy cannot be revealed, whilst his justice has to rid the flock from those who bring disease and death into the fold?—Even were it otherwise, say that our deeds are all righteous, how, then, does it stand with our faith? where is that yielding to divine promises, to God's guidance, which deems nothing surer than his word, which believes nothing truer than his commands?—It is almost in vain to look for such results among many an Israelitish community; everywhere we find each man seeking to promote his own temporal welfare, and to do the least for the benefit of Israel at large: whilst faith as such is thought too refined for the mass, or is overwhelmed by the pursuits of worldly interests which have some tangible result. With such sins among us, it is in vain to look for any salutary amendment of our spiritual condition; there must be a reform, not in the manner the word is generally used, but one of the spirit, which is to show itself in a noble attachment to religious truths and ancestral obedience, such as was witnessed in that moment of holy enthusiasm, when Israel stood as one man at the foot

of Sinai, to listen to the holy Decalogue from the mouth of the Most High.—Could we witness once such a scene of devotion and obedience in Israel, the day of the Messiah would not be far distant, and then might we look confidently forward to the accomplishment of all the good which God has promised to his people. But whilst each man seeks for happiness beyond the pale of religion, it is futile to expect a blessing, which is conceivable only within the law; for the whole regeneration of Israel rests on the basis of the precepts and commandments which we have received as the will of our Father in heaven.

Perhaps we shall be asked: "How are we to do to work out our national happiness through repentance, seeing that each man can but act for himself?" To this we answer, Let every man act as though on him alone depended the salvation of Israel, whilst assuredly his own salvation depends upon his faith and deeds. Who ever discovers any evil within himself, and who must not do so upon a candid examination? let him set about rectifying the defect which he discovers; let him not hold a parley with inward sin, but let him confess it privately to his God, and then show openly to his fellow-men that he has found something to condemn, something to be amended. It is possible that he may feel the task severe, to stand abashed before the world; but when he reflects, that from God he cannot hide himself, that from the Lord's ken he cannot escape, that the derision of man is not worth heeding, nor his praise worth obtaining when the welfare of the soul is the price at stake: he will gladly bring the sacrifice of his pride to his eternal salvation, throw himself completely upon the mercy

of God for support, and pour out his soul in prayer, until the inward struggle is subdued, and he finds peace within his bosom, and joy and tranquillity in the new pursuit of righteousness.—But not in the pride of his own strength should the sinner approach the accomplishment of his reformation. The Bible says, in the name of God: "I will heal their backsliding;" the grace of the Lord, undeserved by any thing which we can do, must and will be given to bring to a happy conclusion, what man commences in faith and humility. The initiatory step every individual must take; without our knocking at the portals, the gates of mercy will not be opened to us; but when we approach as humble suppliants, condemning ourselves because we discover that our deeds accuse us before divine Justice, the light we seek will spring up within us, and we shall be guided safely by the outstretched arm which is ever held out to those who wish to return from transgression. At first the struggle will be fierce; old unbelief will constantly call up grounds of doubt, and endeavour to prove by specious reasoning, that religion is not necessary to salvation; inveterate habits of indifference will cause us to look with carelessness upon observances on the practice of which we have but lately entered; but with every day, the tone of confidence in divine things will become stronger; faith will strike deeper roots every hour; the love of God will momentarily entwine its silken fibres closer around the heart, and the perseverance in acts of piety will soon render them second nature to us, when once we have felt how much more happily our daily toil passes along, if, so to say, it is presided over by the

invisible spirit of goodness in which the righteous endeavour to act.

If this is the course of the repentant sinner, he never will need to look back upon the enormity of his previous misdeeds, he can return even unto the Lord his God; for every step he takes in this new path will withdraw him by so much from the evil, and bring him unto the proper goal which he should endeavour to reach. But he must not stop short before he has accomplished this duty; he must not relax till he has come to the platform which the law points out to him; for without this his repentance is not complete, and he has not returned unto the Lord, since he has halted on the way, not heeding the dictates of religion which bid him to be of good courage and act righteously, whereas he formerly was the slave of sin. In this, therefore, there must be no hesitation, no wavering; for by perseverance only can the labour be accomplished, and by this only can the love of God be again brought to smile on the sinner; since the backsliding will be healed, the wounds of the spirit bound up, the bleeding heart be stanched solely by the balm which drops incessantly from the hem of the garment which covers the throne of everlasting Mercy.—Does this doctrine of repentance say, that men's acts deserve grace? By no means; it merely teaches that man must do something himself before he can be received in favour, nay, before he can be permitted to repent. The law was given to all alike, to the guilty no less than the innocent; and whoever then truly feels that in duty only there is life, since it is in nothing else, must meekly submit himself to the guidance of God, who will receive

in kindness the little which man can do, and perfect in his mercy what the mortal can only commence. There is no partiality in the heavenly tribunal, each individual there appears as he really is, and the favour which is extended to one will necessarily be shown to all. Were it now, that an expiation had been made for man, other than the gift of the law, if the knowledge of this would be requisite to insure salvation, and it be yet unknown to the greater portion of mankind: there would needs be partiality in the distribution of God's favour. But if, as we contend, by the law man is condemned or justified, and they only are punished by its letter who are acquainted with its demands: the wisdom of God stands justified, inasmuch as they who know the law cannot plead its inconvenience and onerousness as an excuse for their non-observance of its details, seeing that it contains nothing which ordinarily is not within the scope of every son of Israel, and there where unavoidable necessity steps in, the goodness of God will pardon the sin involuntarily committed.

If every individual does after this manner, if he purifies himself from his individual iniquity, he has contributed his share towards the regeneration of Israel. Let him not be dismayed at the smallness of the number of the faithful; who knows but his example may excite others to imitation, and induce many to throw themselves penitently before the footstool of mercy, to seek like him the favour of the Lord which they have lost by their transgressions. It is true that in our day the voice of gain and the desire for pleasure appeal loudly to the unthinking crowd to follow the inclination of their own hearts

which leads to evil; but it is also true that a time will come when the children of Israel will return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and still this seeking will have to be brought about by the actions of individual Israelites alone. What need is there then to fear? is God not able to help? or will his word fail of accomplishment?—Assuredly not; and blessed therefore will they be who, persevering to the end, will see the fulfilment of all the good which God has in store for his people.—For the time will come, when the ancient sinning will not be witnessed any more; when there will be but one idea in religion, that is, the belief in one God; when but one law will be the guide of all mankind; when one king, David, will bear rule on earth, and carry a sceptre unstained by oppression, upheld by righteousness; and when one worship will unite all the sons of man, who will all resort to the place where righteous priests shall offer up the sacrifice of purity in the precincts of the Omnipresent God; and then all will see the difference between the sinner and him who returned from iniquity in Jacob, and worshipped anew the eternal Essence with love and fear.

The call "Return, O Israel!" is directed to the individual no less than the nation. The promise of redemption is made to the single man no less than to the masses. So, let all then arise in the strength of love, and cling to the altar, whence a sweet savour ascends to the holy throne; and since the offerings have been abolished through our sins, let each man bring the sacrifice of a broken heart, a sacrifice which the Lord will not despise. And whilst repenting, let it not be for a selfish end of individual salva-

tion: let it be also as a sacrifice for the welfare of all Israel, and let the holy Jerusalem not be forgotten as one of the things to be prayed for, when the returning child claims admission to grace, and asks by prayer, to be allowed to enter into the mansion of his heavenly Father.

Who knows but the Lord may see the heart of many who thus seek Him, and consider this the time to withdraw his anger; since He may deem the trials, which his people have suffered, sufficient recompense for all the sins they have done. Should even no public result flow from a sincere repentance, the sinner has done all that the Bible demands of him; and though he may fail in one part of his ardent wishes, he may silently have laid the foundation for much good after he shall have been called away to the reward of his labours. No man lives without a good result who has lived well, and no act of righteousness is ever done but it bears fruits, no less on earth than in heaven.

Arouse yourselves then, sons of Israel! whenever the season of repentance comes round in its annual circuit; listen to the voice of the Shophar, which is the call to reflection instituted unto Israel for all generations, and let it speak to you of the goodness of God and his kindness, that He is good in taking back the sinner when he forsakes his way, and kind to the erring, inasmuch as He forgives freely the transgressions which are repented of.—And may you daily increase in righteousness; may your faith be hourly more confirmed, and may the result of your striving be salvation unto yourselves, and glory and peace to Israel, and a united worship of one God for all the

children of Adam: so that all the ends of the earth may see revealed the glory of our God from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

Tishry 5th. } 5604.
Sept. 29th. }

DISCOURSE VI.

THE COVENANT WITH NOAH.

O Eternal One, our Father! Thou who rememberest the covenant and art true to thy word! receive us when we come before Thee in the purity of faith and the singleness of devotion. In olden days when mankind had sinned, and the earth had become corrupt in thy presence, Thou didst send thy pouring rain and split the fountains of the deep to sweep the offending generation from off thy soil, and they perished in their iniquity. But knowing the weakness of our frame, Thou hast promised that in no future time should the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh, as Thou hadst then caused to be done. Do, therefore, our God and King! remember the other covenant which Thou hast also sworn by thy truth, that as the promise to Noah should be the promise to Israel, that neither should Jacob's sons be cut off from among the nations, nor the children of Adam be swept from the earth. In both these gracious promises thy truth has hitherto not wavered, and we see with adoration

the beautiful bow of the sky spanning the horizon, glowing in brilliancy of light against the black cloud of darkness, an emblem of heavenly joy amid earthly tribulation; and in reverence we search the words of thy law, the testimony unimpeachable, the wisdom unapproachable which prove that Thou art God, and we thy chosen servants on the face of the earth.—Guide, therefore, our spirit in the path of truth, preserve our feet from stumbling, that our redeemed souls may unceasingly praise thy Name, from eternity to eternity. Amen.

Brethren!

In all that the Lord does He has a fixed end in view, which is the object of his action. Man may at times act from caprice, from the impulse of the moment, or may be urged by circumstances to do what is counter to his inclination. Far is this from the nature of the Omnipotent; He is not actuated by caprice, for all his ways are just; he acts not from the impulse of the moment, for his are the wisdom and the counsel, and He knows the sources of events; nor can He be made to do aught urged by circumstances counter to his inclination, for He alone in his might is one and powerful above all, and who can say to Him, "What doest Thou?" In truth, with Him there is the abode of light, and He needs no prompting to stimulate Him to do what is righteous, nor can aught that exists move Him from the path of even-handed justice with which his providence governs all existence. The Scriptures, it is true, occasionally employ expressions which, in fact, are only applicable to man; so we are told that "God was grieved in his heart"

at the misconduct of the human race, and He says, "For I repent that I have made them;" but we must take these expressions only, as we have said on a previous occasion, as pointing out to us results which in man would proceed from grief, disappointment, and regret, which emotions nevertheless are not found in the Deity, since his essence is too pure to be affected by the accidents which afflict humanity. God had made man in his divine image; this man was a creation of great importance and a wonder in himself; according to human phraseology therefore he must have been of great interest to the Lord from the very circumstances attending on his creation. This being, though enjoined to be good and to eschew evil, preferred the course of disobedience, totally disregarding the will of God. In man, such a failure in his hopes would cause grief and vexation. Again, the nature of sin is punishment, and when man chooses to lay hold of transgression, he grasps also the attendant sorrow which is inseparably connected with it; in other words, "the soul that sinneth must die;" consequently as the total destruction of his handiwork would in man betoken that he regretted that he had made it, we are also told figuratively, that this likewise took place in the mind of God. But it is not necessary to adduce many arguments to prove that the Scriptures by employing the phrases we have cited do not mean to ascribe human frailties to the Holy One. On the contrary, we are merely presented with a lively image of the ways of Providence, which otherwise would be unintelligible to us. Let us attempt an exposition. From the chaos which the Creator had called forth in the beginning, the dis-

order was removed step by step, as the word of the Most High was sent forth on its mission to fashion and to shape every thing, and to endow all nature with the mantle of light and beauty. Matter assumed a thousand forms of inanimate existence, and millions of plants, with life without motion, displayed their Maker's skill. Animals, the highest and the lowest, received organization, life, motion, will; but man alone received speech and intellect. To each creature, however, were given time, space, limit, which, if transcended, would destroy the form it had received; for so is the will of God, that everything on earth shall be destructible by agents which have received power over it. We will not particularize to show how the earth, as an inanimate substance, all the plants and animals, are subject to this law, but merely revert to the animal that has been endowed with soul and speech. In the power of virtue only has he strength and permanence; but let vice obtain control over him, and he falls at once from the station which his Maker has assigned to him. In other words, the beings on earth other than man are destructible by the limits which outward nature has set to them, as the sphere in which they must necessarily move; man alone, however, has another destroyer assigned to him, because he is endowed with an independent will and an intelligent soul, and this destroyer is the dominion of unregulated desires, which, implanted in him for the wisest of purposes, need the restraint of the limits which religion has assigned to them, or else they will, like the material agents which destroy animal life, endanger and finally subvert the life of the soul, the immaterial part of man. There is, there-

fore, according to this simple view, no hesitation, regret, failure, disappointment ascribable to God when punishment overtakes sinners; since they only meet with the necessary recompense which flows from their own conduct; for the condition upon which their state of peace or woe depends is that they guard the limits which restrain the growth of the evil, and this power is given to them, and the responsibility is therefore with the strictest accords of justice thrown on themselves. Yet the Lord loves all his creatures; He created them for happiness, He gave them the means of acquiring felicity; and as punishment, though to sinners, is a virtual gainsaying of a state of exemption from sorrow, we can represent to ourselves the act of chastisement only as a state of grief to the Deity; since as men we cannot conceive the perfect goodness of God compatible with necessary punishment, without imagining that He lets the evil come with unwillingness on his part. Still we do not mean to convey the idea that his mind is thereby subject to that anguish which we experience in our course of conduct; for we can only see the immediate effects of our acts; He, the blessed all-seeing One, on the contrary, looks beyond the moment of chastisement to the ultimate result through thousands of generations, of which He beholds link by link joining itself to the endless chain which unites all nature in one, from its birthday to its dissolution; and the temporary evil therefore also will, in its place, produce good and happiness in the aggregate to all the intelligent creatures who are on earth; as we are taught, "The Lord hath made all for his sake, even the wicked for the day of evil." (Prov. xv. 4.)

The individual must of necessity suffer for his transgression; his name may be blotted out from among the living; his generation may be cut off from under the heaven of the Lord; but the masses will be benefitted, and the concatenation of good which springs from the partial evil will more than compensate to the world what the single one has suffered, because he knew the right and preferred the path of perdition. But do we know what becomes of the sinner himself, when he has met his punishment? Even if he dies in this visitation, what can we understand of the state to which he has been translated? We speak of the enormity of the wrong which has been done; but we know absolutely nothing of the feelings of the evil-doer; he dies because he has sinned; he is perhaps punished with death by the hands of man for his crime; the judges, who sit on earth in the chair of God, have found him guilty according to the law of a heinous transgression, and they declare that the letter and spirit of Scripture condemn him to an ignominious end, and he perishes as a criminal; but whilst he dies, his spirit has probably atoned for the sin he has committed; the mortal part has been afflicted, but the soul has been rendered free through repentance, and contrition, and humility, and the ignominy of a public death; and now the Judge of mercy receives in the light of his countenance the rejected, through sin, of man, the accepted, through penance, of Heaven. Is there in this the vacillation of human frailty? The sinner has lived for the day of the evil, and the goodness of God has been exalted, whilst universal justice has been satisfied; and the punishment therefore was no evil, though it afflicted the sinner. For

suppose that he had gone on heaping iniquity upon iniquity, that blood should have washed out the stains of blood that were upon his garments from other deeds of violence; that his example should have led many others more and more astray from the path of righteousness, and he had been permitted to pass along with impunity: would this have added to his own means of salvation, or been a benefit to others? would thus God's mercy have been vindicated? O no! for daily more evil would have sprung from unrepented, unatoned-for sins; the restraint therefore put upon the career of vice, that subverter and destroyer of human happiness, was the legitimate result of the dealings of an all-good Providence with his creatures, and the sinless were protected and restrained by the example of retribution which overtook the worker of evil, and his own salvation was secured by the admonition to repentance which the visitation of God or the arm of justice opened to the obdurate; and in a purified state the exalted spirit, whilst abashed because of its misdeeds in the flesh, will praise the outstretched arm that broke through his fall the bands of iniquity.

From what we have advanced it will appear that the transgressions of man do not frustrate the purposes of God, but that on the contrary the whole range of history is a part of providential rule on earth. They who see nothing but chance or natural causes in whatever occurs before them, may perhaps suppose that the happiness of the Most High, as Creator, may at one time or the other have been abridged by causes which He could not control. But to us who are taught differently, who have been certified that "the eyes of

the Lord roam everywhere, watching the good no less than the evil," history tells a different tale; it relates to us with unerring certainty, that whatever occurred in times past, no matter what the actors designed to do, always had a measurable beneficial effect, if viewed as a chapter in the history of the world, and that no evil was ever witnessed which was unaccompanied by good. Let us examine, for instance, the fact of the flood, which destroyed all mankind save a single, small family of eight persons; the judgment was awful, transcendently striking in its nature and effect. To this day the traces thereof are visible upon the whole earth, on the summits of mountains, in the caverns of the valleys. Animals which once existed, vast, strong, powerful, are now and then disinterred, buried as they are in the solid soil, or covered over with towering masses of polar ice. A whole generation of gigantic men also perished, and desolation reigned for an entire year triumphant over a surging ocean which covered over the entire habitable globe. Did not in this general destruction the work of God fail of its end? Where was there evidence of mercy and foresight in this entire wasting? you will ask. But reflect for one moment: man was gifted with the freedom of choice between good and evil; no force could be laid consistently with human responsibility upon the nature of Adam's sons; and despite of the revelation of God's will which they had received, they forgot all their allegiance to their Maker, and filled the earth with violence and a general corruption of morals. Admonition had failed of effecting any good, for we have every reason to believe that the pious men of those early ages did teach a better course to

their contemporaries, who would not listen to the guides of righteousness whom the Lord had raised up among them. A lesson, therefore, was necessary to impress upon all future ages of man that responsibility is a necessary accompaniment of human actions, and that, when necessary, the masses can just as well be reached by divine vengeance as individuals; since He is supreme to all, and all are within the reach of his universal power. But all men were not indiscriminately destroyed; for a remnant was left to repeople the earth, and he, who had been found, we must believe, alone righteous in his generation, was constituted the father of a renewed race of the sentient beings, to whom the earth had been assigned as their habitation: thus proving as always, that there is no judgment without cause, and that even in wrath the Lord remembers mercy.—We shall observe in all our investigations, that great lessons are taught but once in the history of the world, and that the effect once produced will stand as a warning or example to all futurity. And so well adapted are the works of God to this end, that the impressions they leave are of that degree of endurance, that no action of time can possibly obliterate them. Such are the calling of Abraham; the redemption of Israel from Egypt; the public proclamation of the law; the conquest of Palestine; the scattering of the sons of Jacob; and so are many great events in history; so also was the flood, and so will be the final restoration of the Israelites under King David, the anointed of our God, and the universal reign of peace and knowledge of the Lord, when the warfare of falsehood against truth shall have ceased. It is perhaps different in individuals;

the special providence (השגחה פרטית), or the kindness of the Lord as displayed towards each and every one of his creatures, teaches not by annihilation, by overpowering, by astounding acts; but it speaks by the sweet sounds of persuasion, by the tones of kindness, by the appeals of entreaty and love. A thousand sources of joy are offered to each man; the earth brings him fruit, the trees are loaded for him with blossoms and a plentiful increase; the skies wear for him the gorgeous livery of the brilliant rising of the sun and the effulgence of his setting; the sight is ravished with beauty wherever it turns; the ear drinks in sweet sounds from millions of fountains of harmony, and the taste is gratified, and the smell excited by innumerable objects which administer to their wants. Law and revelation too speak to him in a different voice from that with which they address multitudes; for they appeal to his helplessness when unprotected, without a knowledge of a God, without a certainty of his ways with man; they show him how utterly insignificant the wisest, the strongest, the richest, and the best must always be without the co-operation of their fellow-men. To man, as such, therefore, the lesson is constantly repeated that he is accountable to God and man for whatever he does; that he cannot live without the worship of a God, that he cannot exist without the mutual kindness to and from his fellow-creatures. If he now errs, the thunderbolt of destruction is not hurled upon his defenceless head; the Lord does not withdraw his kindness from him, leaving him exposed to the attacks of evil which he may not be able to combat; but He sends admonition after admonition, and waits

with long-sufferance until the day of his death, that he may repent perhaps and forsake the evil. The doors of repentance are never closed, and the hand of Mercy is always stretched out from heaven to lift up to its blessed abode whomever is willing to enter its portals through means of righteousness and amendment.—So are the blessings sent to man always of an individual nature; they come not in masses; but day by day he experiences the renewed bounty of his heavenly Father, who constantly provides for, continually watches over him. Man, moreover, is not alone, and therefore would not alone be the sufferer, were he to be suddenly struck down by punishment when he sins. There are a wife and children, perhaps, who need his care; there may be numerous dependents, who through him obtain their daily bread; nay, there may be a ramification of good which springs from his labours by which much happiness may be scattered abroad, though he himself be unconscious of this. Mercy therefore waits, and the arm of Justice is stayed, till he is ripe for the visitation which is sure approaching.—But with nations, though the warnings too are gradual, though their approach is foreshadowed by a thousand precursory events which demonstrate that the evil is sure in its coming, the punishments as well as the blessings partake of something that may be called a totality, that is, they affect the masses as such, not as composed of individuals; for in national events the *man* is lost amidst the people, and though his own conduct may neither deserve the evil, nor on the other hand the good, he must suffer or will be blessed with the remainder of those among whom he is found; their

lot is his lot, and he cannot complain of the individual injustice, nor exult at his especial good fortune; since his fate is indissolubly bound up with that of those around him.

This at once accounts for the fact we have stated, that national lessons stand forth in the pages of history as strongly marked and distinct whenever they occur; and thus is their nature, that they leave their traces not alone upon the generations when they occur, but they transmit them, too, to after-ages, and the good and the evil which were sent as lessons to mankind, now constitute a mass of evidence of God's rule on earth, which the most obdurate unbelief cannot fail to acknowledge as beyond the power of mere ordinary events of nature to effect. They are therefore instantaneous in their actions, and are tangible, visible, perceptible to the dullest understanding, and not spiritual in their outward character, whatever spiritual effect they may be designed to have upon the mind of mankind.—Whenever therefore any such event, for instance the flood, has taken place, it is no sign of uncertainty in the providence of God, should He declare to us that this occurrence should never happen again; they who have suffered the evil have no cause to complain that they have been severely dealt with; for their punishment was an example no less than a recompense; and though other generations, who are equally sinful with themselves, will not be exposed to the same visitation, that does not argue that they shall escape with impunity, nor have they thereby the promise that another warning, equally efficacious with the one which a promise of God has precluded, may not come to teach them anew by ex-

ample, that the Lord is high and exalted in power, and that from his grasp no sinner can escape.

What we have advanced will, I trust, be a sufficient commentary on the contents of chapters six and seven of Genesis, where we are told how the sinning of the early generations of men doomed the whole race to a sudden and awful destruction. From the time that the decree went forth till its final accomplishment was one hundred and twenty years; there can be no doubt, that Noah was certified during this long period of the impending storm, and that he admonished his unbelieving contemporaries to beware of the sure-coming danger. But when were prophets heeded, whilst the passions heaved within and convulsed the human soul?—So was the early prophet also disregarded, and when the time had arrived, the visitation in all its fearfulness came with appalling suddenness and violence; and the Bible, in elucidating this event, says "that God was grieved in his heart, and had repented that He had made man; but that the righteous Noah had found grace in his sight." You now understand, brethren, that the course of events is merely represented to us in human phraseology, to explain to us the operations of the divine Mind, not to assert that these emotions of grief and regret filled Him who is all purity and holiness.—The sin of mankind had set a limit to their farther continuance on earth; there had been made no covenant of exemption, and the first announcement to Adam stood good, "For on the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." It was therefore the compact which united transgression with destruction, which overwhelmed Noah's contemporaries, and they only

met the doom which had been pronounced against them from the beginning. But when this had been accomplished, and the earth had been a second time rendered the abode of a single family of men: Providence decreed that this one example should be enough for future generations, and that henceforth the sinning earth should not any more be overflowed by the waters of destruction, no matter how great the transgressions of man should be. And thus we are taught in Genesis ix. 11:

והקימתי את בריתי אתכם ולא יכרת כל בשר עוד
מימי המבול ולא יהיה עוד מבול לשחת הארץ:
בר׳ ט׳ י׳:

"And I will establish my covenant with you; and all flesh shall no more be cut off by the waters of the flood, and there shall no more be a flood to destroy the earth."

How good, how constant is the Lord! Ages have since elapsed, and the earth stands unmoved on its foundations; and seasons come and seasons change, and there are seed-time and harvest, and summer and winter, and warm and cold, and day and night, whilst mankind do not cease to follow the inclinations of their hearts, and seek the ways of sin. And ever and anon the rainbow appears, set in the clouds, throwing its radiance athwart the gloom of a lowering sky, to prove that the covenant stands unshaken, equally with the laws of nature which produce this brilliant play of light as a natural phenomenon, soon after the rising or before the setting of the sun. We have thus a continual theme of thankfulness unto Him who re-

membereth his covenant and is true to his word. Yet has He done more for mankind than merely exempting them from a universal death; for He called from amidst mental darkness the patriarch Abraham, in whose seed the whole world should at length be blessed. A covenant was made with him, that to him and his descendants there should always shine a light from amidst the darkness, that is to say, that as a people they should never be cut off from the possession of the law revealed from Sinai, and that ultimately all nations should seek this light and serve, like Abraham's sons, the Lord with one accord. Like the first generation of men, the Israelites refused to hearken unto the voice of kindness, and they were cast out from the land which had been given to them for a possession unto everlasting. Since then a part of them returned and dwelt in the cities wherein their fathers had dwelt; but renewed sin expelled this remnant likewise, and made Israel a second time a stranger among all nations. With all this the covenant with Abraham has not been moved, and like the bow in the clouds stands the law of God, the immutable sign of the Lord's goodness and truth with us; and amidst all the tribulation to which our captivity has exposed us, we have never been utterly forsaken by the helping hand of our almighty Father. But this state of trial will also pass away, and the disjointed members of Israel which now float upon the ocean of tribulation, urged by every wind, assailed by every billow, will amalgamate again at some future day, as one homogeneous mass in the ancient land of Palestine, where the name of God shall be invoked in purity and holiness far surpassing all former glory,

and then will our nation be planted in its own home never more to be plucked up again by the gentiles. And this shall be, as we are told, like the oath to Noah, to whom it was said that the flood should not pass again over the earth; and so shall the favour of God ever shine to Israel, and his face will not be hid again from them.—This will be at the coming of the son of David, when the creation of man after God's image, and the calling of Abraham from Ur in Chaldea will see their real accomplishment; and then all sons of man will see that God is true, and his words are faithful and sure of fulfilment, and that He is no man that He should deceive, and not a mortal that He should repent; and then also will ascend to his throne prayers from pure hearts, and an unceasing smoke of sacrifices of righteousness will arise from his altar, and his name will be adored, and He, the ONE God, be alone acknowledged all the days of the earth, from everlasting to everlasting. Amen.

Heshvan 3d. } 5604.
October 27th. }

DISCOURSE VII.

GRATITUDE TO GOD.

HOLY ONE! from Seir Thou camest forth, and the beams of thy effulgence shone from Paran to teach unto thy people wisdom and truth, while thy glory filled the earth, and thy majesty covered the heavens. It was then Thou provedst thy powerful might, and then nations felt thy overruling providence, when they beheld Thee as the Teacher of truth and as the Father of mercy; inasmuch as Thou becamest the Lord of the spirits of all Israel, after Thou hadst constituted thyself their Benefactor by redeeming them from galling thraldom. And can we doubt thy love? or imagine ourselves forsaken? O banish these thoughts of unbelief from our hearts, and cause us to be conscious that we are truly blest above all nations and tongues, since we are permitted till this day to meditate in thy law, and to invigorate our souls by the wisdom that flowed from Thee. Cause us, by thus teaching us, to confide in thy love, to lean on Thee alone for support in all our trials, that we may feel and know that from thy bounty solely issues forth our peace, as from thy wisdom proceeds the law which guides us; so that by obeying the last we may secure unto us thy overflowing goodness, which overshadows all flesh, and which quickens every spirit. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Of all sins, or rather to speak more correctly, sources of sin, the one most productive in its pestilential fruits is ingratitude. It steels the heart against emotions of thankfulness, it inducts pride into the chambers of the soul, and poisons the springs whence issue the acts of man. When one feels not love for him from whose kindness he has been assisted, from whose bounty he has been fed: what can urge him to be forbearing when excited by wrath, or to be kind to those who appeal to his beneficence and bounty? He himself thinks not that benefits received are a claim to confer a recompense upon the benefactor; hence he slights those who have served him, and he cares not to be the friend to others, seeing that he must expect in and from others the same traits and the same treatment others find in him. Were it that such a selfishness could confer even a qualified species of happiness upon its victim, we might perhaps pardon it as an evidence of human weakness; but it is in no wise a source of happiness; for the ungrateful person is always dissatisfied with himself, and constantly finds his pride checked when firmly resisted by those who have obliged him, or slighted by those on whom he conceives himself to have the claim of favours conferred. For his own part he feels nothing that unites others to him by any thing they can do, and so likewise by his own theory there can be nothing he can do for others which should bind them to him. He therefore goes through life unloving and unloved, and is at war with himself, because at war with his species. What prevents him from injuring his parents? does he experience within himself the call of

nature which bids him love and cherish those who watched over his infancy, and tended him when sickness had seized on his helpless limbs?—They now are old and helpless in their turn; misfortune has laid its heavy hand upon them; the wealth which they once had to leave to their worthless son has taken wings and sped away; and now the ingrate mocks their gray hairs, derides their wrinkles, and spurns from his dwelling those who bore with his infirmities, and leaves those to the cold charities of the world who sacrificed sleep and comfort, that he in his hour of sorrow might not lack for all that could administer to his wants, and promote his recovery.—And should a man, who feels not the throb of gratitude, honour his God? Can it be possible that he, who forgets the benefits which his earthly parents have heaped upon him, remembers the Author of his being, though it is his bounty that feeds him, and it is his world in which he lives? No, no, ingratitude is incompatible with religion; and the sacred germ of love for God cannot take root in the heart which is oblivious of kindness, which values nothing that does not prospectively administer to its material interest and tangible gain. And what is it at length that impels the humble-minded to acts of worship, those men I mean who serve God not from interest and fear? It is the consciousness that there is a Being who in love and mercy created all, that each creature might have joy and happiness in its own proper sphere, that to Him we can render no recompense save obedience, and that by this obedience we thus satisfy the noblest principle of our nature, the esteem and gratitude of the enlightened spirit towards its Benefactor. There may be a reli-

gion of fear, where the Deity is ever placed before men as a terrible avenger of every act that militates against religion; there may be another religion which represents God as always paying some tangible good for every act of obedience; but these two species, though they are very proper in the incipient state, when the soul is first awakened to a sense of its duty towards God, when his justice and bountifulness are good incentives to a strict line of duty: still not such motives can make us acceptable to the Most High, since religion, which has no better basis than blind terror or parsimonious self-interest, is not apt to stand the shock of adverse circumstances, when countervailing combinations may perhaps drown the voice of fear or overbalance the dictates of gain, either spiritual or temporal, which one expects from a pursuit of religion.—Yes, we are commanded in Scripture to love the Lord our God. But what is love? attachment, a kindness of sentiment which draws different beings together in one bond of union. Again, what can be the feeling which should produce this love in man towards God? nothing but a sense of gratitude for the benefits which are heaped on him every day of his existence. Turn we where we will, we must discover motives of gratitude in the thousands of wise provisions which are made for our well-being and even amusement. Every thing is instinct with usefulness and beauty; and the ills of life themselves give a zest to our joys, which uninterrupted enjoyments could never permit us to experience. If now we think well on this, and become convinced that we are powerless, in every sense of the word, to do aught in return to the Most High for all his good-

ness; that our greatest and most important acts cannot reach Him in any manner; that we cannot add the smallest imaginable item to his power, glory, and happiness, by which means the debt due Him could in anywise be cancelled or reduced: we must become drawn, so to say, to the presence of the Holy One by the bands of love, and we must be filled with emotions of gratitude to do whatever He may demand of us. Should now no favours be showered on us, should no prosperity, which we in truth have no right to demand at his hands, be given us as our share in this world—say, in what have we been wronged? in what have our rights been infringed upon? was the Deity bound to bless us with riches and honours? must we in addition to life, and reason, and health, be also apportioned with a station and means of enjoyment above our brothers? or have we a claim because we have done merely that which our Creator has a right to demand of us because He has wrought so many acts of beneficence in our behalf?—If therefore gratitude towards God has ripened into love towards Him, if we experience an inward call to unite ourselves to Him closely and truly, "because He is good, and his mercy endureth forever:" how holy will be the resignation with which we yield ourselves to his guidance; we no longer reason why or wherefore we should hear and obey; enough we know that it is our Father who speaks, and we exclaim, "Speak, O Lord, for thy servants hear." And should the world tempt us with its flatteries and vanities, we will avert our sensual ear and eye, and place between them and the temptation the law of God which teaches us the path of salvation, and our feet will be firm that they stumble

not, and our heart will be invincible, because it is armed with the power of gratitude to resist even unto the death the evil which threatens to ensnare it in the folds of sin and transgression. Should power, conferred on us by the voice of man, counsel us that we are now above the need of obedience: how quickly will the holy inspiration which the Bible offers remind us that this gift too is a bestowal from on high, and no cause of ingratitude to induce us to forget the Rock that formed us; inasmuch as the more we have received, the greater should be the attachment to the will of Him by whose sufferance kings reign and dominion is granted unto princes.—If on the other hand distress and sorrow chase from our souls every emotion of joy and pleasure; if our light becomes darkened, and our sun stands eclipsed in the firmament: we shall not forget our duty to our God, whilst we are mindful that, though now suffering, we have had our enjoyment too, no less than those who now seem to be the object of our envy. And is it not so,—that every station has its cause of humility? every station its cause of thankfulness? are we on the one hand not all mortal and accountable, and blessed and protected on the other?

These and the like considerations should and will always make us turn to the Most High to learn of Him what He wishes us to do, in order that we may meet with his approbation and secure to ourselves the love which we have obtained from his goodness, from the moment we entered into life. And knowledge of this kind will seal the bond of love between God and his creature; for this one will then feel that he must labour in the field of righteousness and for-

sake the ways of iniquity, not because he dreads the rod which is extended over him; not because he, like a mercenary, stands ready to receive his wages for every little act of goodness; but because he feels himself impelled by the conscious inferiority with which true gratitude has influenced him, and he cannot rest until in his own mind he has done something to prove that the bounty of Heaven has not been misapplied to an object unworthy even in his own sight; since the greatest happiness he desires is to assimilate himself to his Master by obedience to the ways of the Deity, as the law commands, "And thou shalt walk in his ways." He will, therefore, not murmur if a station of inferiority, if a life of poverty be assigned to him as his sphere of action, knowing that all existence is but one continuous chain of persons and events, in which each man has his hour, in which every thing has its place. Many there are, therefore, to whom an humble lot must be assigned; but if all have fulfilled their duty, all will be purified by the blessed spirit which God infuses into all; and when the pangs of death have closed this transient life, the true superiority of devotion and piety will be made apparent to the satisfaction of all beholders, who will then be able to distinguish between him who served God and those who have not served Him. But even yet farther can the humble and grateful follower of the Lord proceed; he can act justly without so much as looking for any reward at all, and place upon his acts no value whatever beyond what the mercy of our heavenly Father may affix to them; and he will thus be willing to be the lowest in the kingdom of heaven, provided only that by his conduct the Lord be glori-

fied, and the holiness of the law be exalted in the eyes of the sons of man.

But where ingratitude is seated in the human heart, how can religion take root? where are the incentives which should teach it humility, obedience, charity, and contentment? If the ungrateful man be poor and humble, he will fret because of his lot, and accuse the Deity of injustice; and whilst malevolence and envy rankle in his soul, the possessions of his brothers will not be safe from his violent grasp, if he is not restrained by the strong arm of the civil law; for no act of mercy and bounty of the Lord warms his bosom with veneration, since he is not equal to others around him, and he cannot thank the Lord for a partial good because he has not tasted the full cup of earthly joys; and towards men, even those who have served him, he bears no good-will, seeing that they possess what he in his arrogance believes to be his proper share of worldly goods. Should he on the other hand be wealthy and powerful, and assume that he inherited the blessings and station he holds from his parents: how insignificant will then appear in his eye all who are beneath him; the services of his inferiors are but the just tribute to his exalted standing, and they may think themselves happy if he deigns to accept their homage; and towards God he has no duties to perform; he needs for nothing, and men envy him, and his station is an inheritance from his fathers. For him, therefore, individually the Deity, so he weens, has done nothing which could claim his gratitude. And suppose that he rose from an humble sphere to wealth and rank, he soon forgets Him by whose bounty he was lifted up; he imagines himself

the sole architect of his own fortune, recounts with evident self-complacency the steps which he planned and the measures which he took, the foresight which he displayed more than any other man, and how he rose by his own skill, perseverance, and wisdom. Where is here room for gratitude? for worship of the Lord? for love toward man? To God he considers he has nothing to be thankful for; since he alone, without superior aid, made himself what he is; and why should he stoop to flatter God by a pretended homage which he does not feel within himself? Yet he might perhaps pray, if he thought that his wealth, his power, his prosperity, though all acquired by himself, might be snatched away by an offended Deity; but he again imagines that his foresight will secure him against all vicissitudes; for the skill that made all this heap of riches, that laid the foundations of his great house, will stand him as a defence against the inroads of adverse fortune: why then should he pray?—And towards mankind he carries not the heart of a brother; they are lazy, improvident, clumsy, stupid, or else why are they not rich and happy? did he not grow rich without any one's assistance? and why can others not do the same if they use the right means? or if they are as wise as he is? Such sentiments exclude charity and social love; they forbid regard for the rights of others; because arrogance counsels the proud to look upon all who do not climb the ladder of prosperity as an unworthy sluggish race, who are not entitled to sympathy and kindness, and upon those who are high and elevated, as standing in his way for the attainment of that distinction, which vain man not rarely conceives to be all his own,

simply because he has acquired some share of greatness to which he in the beginning of his career could not hope to attain.—And should adversity darken his prosperity, should he find that his imaginary greatness begins to crumble away into its former nothingness: no regard will be paid to the rights of others; he must sustain himself at all hazards; and the false oath pollutes his lips; fraud will be used to refill his coffers; calumny be employed to destroy a rival's reputation, and friends who confided in his honesty will be sacrificed upon the altar of ambition or the desire for gain, without remorse, without mercy. All, all, because he feels not the sentiment of gratitude towards his Maker for his many acts of kindness; because he values not the services which his mortal brother has rendered him in his hour of need, or the hey-day of his prosperity.—And at length the ingrate dies, be he rich or poor, great or humble, with not half his desires fulfilled, with discontent in his heart, with insatiate pride overflowing his soul; and soon his memory will be lost, and if his deeds are remembered, it will only be to recall the evils which spring up when man has not learned to humble himself before God, and to love his fellow-mortal like himself.

Ingratitude is not however always confined to individuals, but it sometimes extends itself to nations, and when discovered among these, it is equally fatal to the general prosperity, as it is to the single victim who yields himself a captive to this source of sin. Of all nations that have incurred a deep debt of gratitude towards the Deity, none is more eminent than the people of Israel. Not only have we received life and intelligence like other families of the earth; but what

is far more, we are in possession of a revelation of the will of God which points out to us clearly the path of righteousness which will lead to everlasting felicity. Whilst darkness overspread the earth, and nations walked in the murky cloud of impenetrable mental gloom, it pleased the Most High to send his voice among us, and let his words resound in our ears, that we might be instructed by his own glory, and be taught how to avoid the errors which lay like a heavy burden upon the souls of other nations. We were not left to *discover* by slow degrees, by painful investigation, the means which would establish a happy government based upon just laws; but the laws themselves were *revealed* from on High, from amidst the terrors of a glorious descent on Horeb, and the state was established on a basis which has become the admiration of after-ages. In our republic every man had his rights secured to him by the fundamental compact on which the state was founded. His property was his own, which the chief of the government dared not to take from him by open violence or secret fraud. His body was free from molestation from any other citizen or stranger in the entire length and breadth of the land; and even the courts of justice could not convict him of a crime he had evidently committed, unless by the mouth of two credible witnesses. Each man could rise to the highest honour, and no extraction from lawful connexions was a disgrace, though the parents had been the poorest and humblest in the land. Intelligence and knowledge were necessarily connected with the study of the law, and a high degree of civilization and refinement sprung from the very fact of a great people coming

as one man to worship the Lord God of hosts three times every year, in the place which He had chosen to let his name dwell there. Had we been truly thankful, had we felt in truth that the love of the Most High deserved our gratitude, that the laws He had proclaimed demanded our obedience: how happy would we have been! a united people, intelligent, wise, virtuous, wealthy, and great, would have served unitedly the sole God, the universal Father, the immutable Unity that had created the world. For here every thing called for love, every thing spoke of goodness; and sorrows (which nations too suffer in the rule of a wise Providence) would have been referred to the gracious mercy of the Father, who had sent blight upon the corn to admonish those who tilled the ground that they had become lax in their devotion; who had let a fire devastate a city to instruct its inhabitants that they had not been obedient as becomes children of salvation; and each trial would thus have resulted in riveting yet closer the bonds of love which united us to the Creator of the world. But prosperity came, and we waxed fat and kicked; we were weary of the service of Heaven, and made ourselves images, the likenesses of things above, on the earth, and in the waters beneath; we bent the knee to vanities which have no power to save, and went astray after the desires of our hearts to follow in the ways of the gentiles.—And when admonitions were sent, when prophets were deputized to speak in the name of the Most Holy, when we were told to reflect on the many benefits we had received as a nation: we were too hardened to listen, and the voice of gratitude was silenced in our souls. And when

the Babylonian captivity had been endured, and we had been permitted to reoccupy the land of promise: still the love of God had not penetrated our hearts sufficiently to make us willing servants in his sanctuary. Therefore did the last of the prophets address our fathers in the following words, in the commencement of his mission:

אהבתי אתכם אמר ה׳ ואמרתם במה אהבתנו הלוא
אח עשו ליעקב נאם ה׳ ואהב את יעקב:
מלאכי א׳ ב׳:

"I have loved you, saith the Lord, and you have said, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau brother to Jacob, saith the Lord, and I have loved Jacob?" Malachi i. 2.

How well the prophet expostulates with his rebellious countrymen. In no instance, as he says in the sequel, did it appear that they honoured God as a father, or feared Him as a master; they experienced not the emotion of gratitude towards the Creator, but complained as though their cause were not properly attended to by the Judge of all flesh. They had been punished for their sins by a banishment from their land, and this they fancied as a sign of hardship which they ought not to have endured. But says the prophet: "I have loved you, saith the Lord!" revert to the many instances of signal divine goodness which followed Jacob in his history, from the moment that the two nations, Esau and Israel, were separated and divided from their birth; see how event has been linked to event, till the son of a shepherd in Palestine has become the light of the world,

inasmuch as the knowledge of divine things has begun to spread from his descendants all over the civilized world, through their temporary sojourn among strange nations; behold how your dispersion has not been annihilation; reflect that the downfall of the state was not a destruction of the people: and still you doubt of the divine love so strongly marked for you? has it not accompanied you during the travels of Abraham, till Jacob went down to Egypt? did it not abide with you when you laboured heavily in bricks and mortar, and all manner of labour in the field? was it not in the midst of you when you cried to heaven by reason of your affliction? did it not send a Moses to ransom you from bondage? did it not speak to you on Sinai, when the law proceeded from the lips of Almighty Power, and teach you law, justice, wisdom, truth? did it not feed you in a land barren and unsown, in which there is no water even to drink? did it not march before your armies, scattering many and powerful nations, whose lands were given you for an inheritance? did it not address itself to you in the many encounters your sins caused you to have with idolatrous nations, who always quailed before you when you called upon the Lord in your afflictions? and lastly, did you not experience it most signally in the fact that, though you transgressed, you were nevertheless not cut off in your iniquity, and in the fact that your temple, though destroyed, has been rebuilt before your eyes, because God opened your bonds and bid a mighty king to strike off the shackles which a great conqueror had fastened on your limbs? And yet you doubt that God loves you? and you excuse yourselves for irreligion by

averring that you owe nothing to the Almighty, as though He had conferred no unmerited favours, undeserved mercy, on your race and yourselves?—And to this, our own day, beloved brethren, do the words of Malachi not fail of their application.—Since that day, the temple, which had been restored, has been again levelled with the dust, because disunion and strife had filled Jerusalem's streets with blood, and the heaps of slain brothers that fell by the murderous sword in the hands of their brothers; and the enemy came over our fertile plains and fruitful mountains, and pulled down our glory from our heads, and cast down the towers of strength which adorned our land, and swept off the temple to which the desire of our sinning hearts was turned. Nevertheless, the law did not perish in the universal desolation, and when the plough was passed over Jerusalem by the ruthless Hadrian, and salt was strewn upon the ruins by a vengeful Roman conqueror, the people of God were not exterminated, nor was their spirit subdued. And to this day the goodness of God claims our grateful return for the many undeserved mercies which He has showered in abundance upon us.—And still where is our gratitude? "The son honoureth the father, and the servant his master!" but we forget our Father in heaven, are ungrateful to our Master whose we are, and by whose word we live! We feel the law, which has preserved us, a burden to our shoulders! and throw off, daily, our allegiance to our heavenly King, the sole Sovereign, who has chosen us for his people! We will not hear Him when He speaks in love; when He claims our gratitude for his many mercies; we wish to be like the nations of the

earth who have ever hated and trampled under foot the sons of Jacob; we wish to forsake the law which Israel's Preserver has proclaimed as his immutable will! Do we not know that in God's love alone can our life be secure? that without his aid we would pass away, and our memory be lost from among men? And say, how shall we repay his goodness? shall we pour out the blood of hecatombs on altars of foreign nations? shall we seek to propitiate him by erecting temples which He has not ordained? by following ordinances which He has not instituted? Not thus can we requite all He has done for us, not thus will be opened to us the portals of life everlasting. But we should stand firm by the standard of truth which the Lord has announced, learn its precepts, and teach them to others; obey them strictly, and exhort others to become obedient; we should let our hearts be full of love for the Most High, and affection for our neighbours; love the name of Israel as the legacy from holy men of former ages; await the salvation which is coming with meek resignation, till the appointed time has dawned upon the earth, and resist walking in the way of the gentiles who, by their flatteries, might wish to withdraw us from the path which our religion points out to us. And when tribulations, individual as well as national, befall us, let us not despair of the love of our Father; let us not ask "Wherein hast Thou loved us?" for indeed He loves us more than we deserve, He cherishes us more than our merits, and His goodness is bestowed, constantly, abundantly, mercifully, although our conduct demand punishment and not blessing. But upon all occasions, be our lot one of weal or of woe; be the

individuals wealthy or poor; be Israel oppressed or free, let us open our hearts to the emotions of gratitude which counsel us to follow the lead of the Deity even if it be unto death; for in his light alone we can see light, inasmuch as his are the sources of everlasting life. Thus, thus only can we honour Him who is our Father; thus only can we recompense Him who is our Master and Benefactor, and thus, thus only, can we enter his kingdom as grateful children, obedient servants, purified spirits, who are to dwell in the mansions of bliss till the earth shall have passed away, and a new creation, pure and holy, shall have replaced whatever is now mortal, corruptible, sinful, and when all spirits shall adore the Lord and worship Him alone, who is the Father and Creator of all. Amen.

Kislev 1st. } 5604.
Nov. 24th. }

DISCOURSE VIII.

MOTIVES OF THANKFULNESS.*

From the rising of the sun even to his setting, let thy name, O our God! be praised; and let all flesh acknowledge thy goodness and thy mercy, wherewith thou governest thy world. All that exists is fed and maintained by thy bounty, because from Thee all

* Spoken at the Synagogue Mikveh Israel, at Philadelphia, on Thanksgiving Day, Kislev 28th (December 21st), 5604.

creatures spring; and it is thy power which makes all great, and which strengthens all. It is thus that in every age, and in every clime, they who fear Thee have experienced this consoling truth, that Thou art the Guardian who watchest over the fate of men; and in prosperity they looked to Thee to continue unto them the blessings which their deeds had not deserved; and in their affliction they raised to Thee their eyes and their heart, that Thou, in thy mercy, mightest redeem them from the evil which rested heavily upon them. And in accordance with this pious feeling, behold us here before thy throne this day, to acknowledge by our presence and our words our gratitude for the many favours which Thou hast showered on this land in the past year. The fields have teemed with plenty, and the product has repaid the labourer's toil; the granaries are filled to overflowing; and hills and valleys have rejoiced under the magnificent harvest which thy mercy had provided for the sons of man. And peace has smiled over all this country, and in all its extent every man has sat under the shadow of his roof, and the sound of war has not terrified him, nor brought alarm to the bosom of his wife and little ones; and equitable laws have held out their strong protection over the high and the low, and none but the evil-doers have had cause to fear the sword of justice which hung suspended over their heads. All this, and more, have we received; and we truly feel that it is not our wisdom and our strength that have brought all this blessing unto us; but that it was thy gracious kindness which has given us enlargement. Be it then thy will to fill our hearts with thankfulness, that we may

be fully impressed with the weight of obligation which rests upon us; that we may be preserved from sin, and continue for years and years to come to be the recipients of the same grace which we have received the past year. In order that our souls may sing thy praise now and for ever. Amen.

BRETHREN!

On an occasion, when our forefather Jacob felt both grateful for past favours, and looked with anxiety to the future, he thus addressed the Deity who had watched over him during his long and weary pilgrimage in foreign lands:

קטנתי מכל החסדים ומכל האמת אשר עשית את עבדך כי במקלי עברתי את הירדן הזה ועתה הייתי לשני מחנות: בר׳ לא׳ יא׳:

"I am not worthy of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shown unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands." Genesis xxxii. 11.

If our pious ancestor, who had in his own person received from the august presence of the Most High the assurance of his protection, found in himself no meritorious acts which could have deserved the mercies and the truth which had been bestowed on him, because of the covenant with Abraham and Isaac which was confirmed to him when he slept at the place which he designated as the "house of God:" how much more must we feel humbled because of all the goodness which has been meted out to us since the first day of our being! It is well, therefore, that

we, both as citizens of this commonwealth and as Israelites, should unite with the other inhabitants of this state, to return thanks, all that we have to give to the Lord, for the many favours which his providence has so bountifully bestowed upon us all in so marked a manner,—at the same time, that we institute an inquiry into our actions, to see whether or not our conduct is in accordance with the sentiment of gratitude which we profess to feel. First, as citizens, I said, that we ought to be thankful. If ever country, other than the blessed commonwealth of Israel, had especial cause for glorifying the most holy Name, it is surely the republic of the United States of America. It is a country which extends from the Atlantic to the great ocean of the West, and from the thunders of the Niagara, where the perpetual bow is reflected by the rays of the sun, unto where the "father of rivers" mingles its waters with the floods of the Mexican gulf; and wherever in this wide domain civilization has pitched her tent, there too liberty has taken up her abode. Here and there some remnant of barbarous laws yet remains; prejudice has as yet in a few places the dominion over sober reason and truth; but in general, wherever waves the flag of the Union there too is liberty of person,—there too is security of property; and what is dearer still to the heart of the lover of truth, sweeter to the soul of the Israelite, there too is liberty of conscience; there man can call on his God in the manner his parents have taught him; there he can believe what his conscience permits him, without suffering political disqualifications for his peculiar religious acts, without being subjected to pains and penalties by an in-

quisition into the state of his religious opinions. And should not Israel's sons love this land? should they not defend it in time of need foremost among its stoutest defenders? Are they not sons of the soil? members of the government? citizens of the republic? Do they not worship as their conscience teaches them? Do they not erect houses of prayer wherever they desire, and call unmolested on the ONE All-Father, whose throne is in heaven, in strains of a distant land, in words of a former age? Ay, and they worship even thus; and where is the adversary who dares to molest them in their constitutional rights? who can abridge in this their unalienable privilege of citizenship? Indeed this is cause of thankfulness, and this blessing comes from God; for He, "who turneth the hearts of kings like water," having compassion on the long sufferings of his people in the lands of their captivity, filled with wisdom the hearts of those who framed the fundamental laws of this country, that they struck off the chains from the captives of centuries, and bid the reason enlightened by the wisdom of God know of no chains save the bonds of religion, of no fetters save the commands of the Most High. Still, with the severance of state from religion, with the annihilation of hypocrisy in order to obtain court-favour, the state of morals has not degenerated below the standard of the Old World; and though we hear of deeds of violence and of fraud which are a disgrace to human nature,—though there are perhaps national foibles which are not chargeable to other countries: it is not saying any more than the simple truth to aver, that as a whole people the inhabitants of this land have no more crimes to answer for than other nations, and

that the state of sinfulness we witness only proves that man in no condition of society is otherwise than prone to evil, and violates the laws of holiness from the perverseness of his disposition, and not rarely from a defective education. This is not the place, nor is to-day the time, to enlarge upon this point; but it opens for the reflecting mind a vast field of inquiry, which will yield also ample fruits if taken in connexion with religion, especially that system to which we Hebrews are attached. Nor has the state suffered from not being supported by a paid hierarchy, and richly endowed religious establishments. On the contrary, the experiment of free institutions on a large scale in an extensive country, with every variety of climate, with an almost entire diversity of interests among its millions of inhabitants, has proved entirely successful, although no church was leagued with the civil power to support it against the turbulence of the popular masses. What is more, though the timid stand trembling in doubt because of the obscure future, and imagine that the dissensions naturally belonging to a popular government will at length disrupt this vast confederacy, and place petty sovereigns at the head of its disjointed members, because they believe that man is not fit for self-government: the philanthropist, guided by the wholesome truths which the Bible so plentifully offers, in government no less than religion, can see no ground for this fear of the timid; and he beholds only the downfall of the constitution in a state of voluptuousness and imbecility like that which overwhelmed ancient Rome, when its love for liberty had been choked by the influx of useless wealth, produced by useless conquests; and if

this should unfortunately be the state of the people, it would be a just punishment for them that they be cursed by Providence with the possession of royal heads and their natural companions, a favoured patrician caste, and a pampered regal church. In the mean time, it is a gift from on High that the liberties of this land are established on a foundation, to say the least, as sure as that of any regal government, and the absolute equality which each citizen enjoys is a cause of thankfulness for us to the Giver of all good.

But independently of these theoretical blessings, which the mere creature of pleasure and the lover of gain may not perhaps value, there are tangible objects of enjoyment, which have been conferred on this land. It is not many years ago, that a spirit of daring and reckless speculation pervaded all classes and stations. Men wanted to grow rich, not by the slow process of accumulation, not by adding little to little, each the fruit of honest industry and legitimate earning, but by quickly amassing where nothing had been invested, and by suddenly reaping a large harvest where nothing had been sown. It was then that a blight fell upon the land; the merchant saw his speculations fail; the supposed wealth was reduced to its nothingness; and the very soil seemed to mourn over the degeneracy of the people; and the husbandman found his harvest deficient; and this vast extent of country, which in other seasons might well be styled the granary of the world, became in its turn indebted to foreign lands for the bread which we ate, and for the seed which was intrusted to the earth at the time of ploughing. The people had confided too much in

their own strength; they had been prosperous for many years, and had grown presumptuous by a reliance on their own resources. It was therefore, doubtless, as we must judge in analogy with the history of the world, that mercantile reverses and scanty crops were sent as providential dispensations, in order to prove to the community, by their own experience, that "If the Lord do not build the house, the builders thereof labour in vain;" and thus it was that when the curse did fall, all the precautions of human foresight were turned to nought, and the boldest in the day of prosperity became timid and alarmed in the hour of peril; and nearly all enterprise was abandoned, as though no more days of success would dawn upon the land. And in the homes of the poor there was sorrow; the many who depend upon the labour of their hands for the bread they daily eat were turned out of their workshops, because those for whom they wrought had no use for their labour; and in compulsory idleness was many a willing workman compelled to waste away the precious time. Soon the little hoard of better days was exhausted; and ghastly want then visited the houses of many who by labour had always hitherto earned a moderate support, and who only needed employment now to place them beyond the reach of absolute want. But who has chronicled the miseries of the poor? who will tell us how great were the struggles and the inward strife before the once independent artisan could submit to ask for alms from his wealthy neighbour, or before he took up the wandering staff, and turned his back upon the home of his childhood, to seek for bread in the distant wilds? Still, amidst all this

prostration of enterprise, the mercy of the Lord was distinctly visible, if man would but regard things with a believer's eye; for the earth again was rendered fruitful, and an immense increase followed on scanty harvests of former years; and many poor could thus purchase abundant food with diminished means of subsistence. More yet has been witnessed. After the evil of commercial distrust had prevailed for a while, confidence has been measurably restored; and the renewed activity in every branch of industry, and the increased demand for labourers to supply the deficiency which a long inaction had produced, prove that the Lord has again visited the land to cause the light of prosperity to cheer up the spirit of those who have felt the weight of the storm, which prostrated so many who deemed themselves secured by their own wisdom against the assaults of adversity.

But, to turn from present advantages, and from occurrences which have taken place under our own eye, let us cast our view back for a space of less than three centuries, and see what America then was. The country had just been discovered by the adventurous Europeans, and on a few spots, favourably situated with regard to climate and the beauty of the landscape, colonies had been planted by bloodstained Spain, in order to conquer the aborigines of the soil, to deprive them of the gold they possessed. I will not detain you with a recital of the murders and cruelties these insatiable bigots were guilty of to glut their unhallowed thirst for unlawful acquisitions; how they nearly depopulated whole islands by forcing the enervated natives to labour in the mines whence they had to extract the shining metal; but I will

merely revert to the arrival, on the northern part of the New World, of a different race of men, who came hither to escape from the persecutions they had to endure in their native England for the religious opinions they entertained. Two hundred years ago the idea of toleration was something revolting to the European statesman, and whoever differed from the religion of the state was subject to pains and penalties for his daring. And whether it was a king of England who excluded the Catholic, the Quaker, and the Presbyterian from a free practice of their religion in his state; whether it was the king of France who banished the Protestant Huguenots from his kingdom; whether it was the ruler of Spain who drove away all dissentients by one fell decree from his dominions, and tortured millions because they dared to differ from the doctrines of the Catholic church: it was all the same, wherever one turned his look; and there was no liberty of conscience, save in the small republic which had conquered its independence from the cruel sway of Spain,—I refer to Holland. It was, therefore, to the northern part of this continent that the English dissenters looked for a home where they might entertain their religious opinions unmolested; and colonists of different sentiments came hither from time to time to establish communities under the protection of the powerful ruler of Great Britain. It is not our province to point out the errors of many of the early settlers; how they, who had fled from persecution for opinion's sake, themselves became persecutors in their new homes of those who differed from them; for it was not to be expected that in times of illiberality men would learn to bear with the

opinions of others, though they themselves had felt the iron weight of unjust power. A few communities, however, there were in which the rights of a free conscience were early recognized; and surprising enough, a Catholic noble, who founded the neighbouring state to the south of us, at a time when the head of his church encouraged the burning of heretics, was perhaps the first* who recognized even here the right of every man to worship God without being molested by the arm of civil power. I need not mention the benevolent founder of this commonwealth† in which we live, and by recommendation of the Governor of which we have consecrated this day as one of thanksgiving, whose natural kindness of heart and statesmanlike foresight inspired him to invite to his colony every man who felt himself oppressed in his native land, and who preferred a life of freedom in the woods of the New World, to fetters on the mind and shackles on his limbs in the Old.

* Yet Lord Baltimore also excluded Jews from an equality in the colony of Maryland, which all Christian sects enjoyed. It was only within the last few years that two succeeding legislatures of the now state of Maryland passed the bill removing the Jews' disabilities, by which the state constitution was amended, and our people were placed upon a perfect equality with all the other citizens of that state. North Carolina and Massachusetts have not yet abrogated the Jewish civil disabilities from their codes. Still, this does not affect our right to worship unmolested, to hold property, and to exercise any lawful pursuit; for, thanks to the general enlightenment of the people, and the principles of free institutions, no abridgment of personal rights could ever be tolerated in this country. [Since this was written, both states mentioned here have abolished these disabilities which exist yet in New Hampshire, if the common report be reliable. It is not easy to find out the exact truth. July, 5627.]

† William Penn.

Enough; bold enterprise, guided by freedom, led into the thickest of the forest thousands of hardy pioneers, and speedily beautiful towns arose on the sea-shore and on the margin of rivers; the wily savage retired before the civilized white man, and woods, which formerly supported but a handful of vagabond hunters, were soon made to yield food and afford ample shelter for thousands of an industrious and thriving population. And now, wander abroad, and behold the immense arms of streams that embrace this land; survey its lakes, miniature oceans in their dimensions; traverse its bays and its inlets; visit its hundreds of harbours, and see the ships that go to every land, that arrive from every clime, bearing away the surplus products this country affords, and bringing the luxuries and necessaries collected from all the world; and reflect that in all the length and breadth of the republic there are peace and plenty: and then say whether you do not recognize causes of gratitude; or do you believe that human wisdom has built up all this greatness? that it is mere human enterprise that has effected all this? O believe it not, that mortals, when unassisted by divine aid, can command success! Powerless is the arm that labours without God, useless is the mind that travails without providential assistance. O believe it! for religion and experience both do teach the lesson, that it is the Lord who disposes of the fate of nations as of individuals, and that it is his goodness which exalts a people, that it is his power which breaks down its proud exaltation, when the inhabitants become presumptuous in their success, and yield themselves captives to base desire, and go astray after the imaginings of their

heart. Is it not, then, true, that as citizens of this republic we have great cause for thankfulness to the Lord of all, because that He has so bountifully blessed the land with liberty—with peace—with plenty—with health? and shall we not unite in praising his holy Name because "He is good, and his mercy endureth forever?"

But as Israelites we have additional motives for gratitude. O, long and weary have been our wanderings! From the day that we were driven from our own land, when the legions of the "benevolent Titus," as false historians term the barbarous conqueror, destroyed all that was dear and holy in Israel, it seemed as though all mankind had declared war against the remnant that had escaped from the famine, and the sword, and the pestilence, and the tooth of wild beasts, which had all combined their destructive efforts at the siege and after the conquest of Jerusalem. We were not permitted to stay near the ruins of our temple and of our homes; the captives were not suffered to weep on their former soil over the downfall of their glory; yes, we were scourged and plucked out of our land; and still, what country would consent to receive us? Whilst paganism yet ruled the Roman empire, we were the scorn of the heathens, and were exposed to all the persecutions which their ignorant hatred of divine truths prompted them to invent. And when the Nazarene faith became the religion of the state, our situation was not less deplorable; for every species of insult, and cruelty, and oppression was constantly resorted to in order to embitter our lives, and make us fear with trembling for the morrow. Had we been brigands, mur-

derers, conspirators against the tyrants who oppressed us, there might have been excuses framed for this scandalous outrage of the rights of humanity witnessed in the hardships we had to endure. But no such crimes were ever laid to our charge; unless it might be that absurd calumny which was often invented at the eve of some new persecution, that we murdered an innocent child of gentile parentage to use its blood at the celebration of our Passover feast. It was no use for us to urge that such an act was contrary to our very religion, in honour of which this crime was said to have been committed; our enemies knew its falsity; but they could not prove by any true means that we were injurious to the state, not even to the church which rested for its support upon the belief in a plurality in the godhead; and yet they thirsted for our blood, they thirsted for our supposed wealth; and they hence inflamed the popular mind by an invented discovery of an enormity at which our souls revolted; and they thus slew without mercy, and they plundered without remorse, and banished without repining those who in their features bore the marks of their descent from the scorned race, or who professed by their acts their belief in the hated unity of God. It was, in truth, this belief which our adversaries hated; it was this principle, which contradicted their proclaimed views of truth, that aroused their ire; and still it was the beloved idea of the Most High and his attributes which had descended to us from the days of Abraham, and it was the watchword which resounded from every son of Jacob, from every daughter of Israel, when they laid themselves down to sleep and when they rose up;

when they met in their assemblies of prayer, on their days of solemn thanksgiving; nay, at the very moment when their ruthless persecutors shook the lighted torch to consume them alive, or bared the glittering sword to strike off their heads, or held the noose to tie them to the ignominious gibbet, because they belonged to the proscribed Jewish race. It makes one sick to revert to the horrors of those times; it is almost incredible that such things have been; that no mercy took possession of the breast of those who professed to teach a religion of love. But not with bodily oppression were the adversaries satisfied; they had found means to torture the soul also. Tender children were torn* from the arms of parents who longed for them all the day, not to be sold into slavery, for that would have been a comparative mercy, but that they might be educated in a religion the followers of which oppressed the parents for their belief,—in a religion which their progenitors resisted even unto death. In short, the sons of Israel were persecuted in every land, and their religion was proscribed wherever its members were found; and only here and there a limited toleration was granted as the price of a burdensome contribution, to be resumed at the caprice or the pressing necessity of their tyrants for farther exactions. O, melancholy has been our lot, and but dim recollections are preserved in history to mark the sorrows which for eighteen hundred years have befallen our people; the world was ashamed to leave records of the wrong that had been

* Instances like this have occurred long since this was written; and the present Pope of Rome has rendered his reign infamous by robbing Jewish parents of their helpless children. July, '27.

heaped upon the unresisting and helpless remnant, whose story was written in blood, and whose fate was remembered only in the tears and complaints of the sufferers. And imagine not that our persecutors are wearied of their task at this very day; O, no! they do not slay any more with the sword, they light not the cruel stake to amuse men and women of royal blood with the sufferings of unbelieving Jews; but they continue to heap disqualifications of various kinds upon us, in order to drive us from our faith, or to diminish our numbers in case we will not yield. This is no idle figure of speech! Would to mercy that the picture were one of fiction, and that Israel had peace! But truth compels us to assert that in many countries of Europe, there especially where the greater part of Israel dwells, laws have been contrived, which if not repealed, will in the course of nature either diminish the Jewish population, or at least prevent the natural increase which in time of peace always takes place.* Singular as it may appear in this country, where every citizen has the right to judge for himself whether he shall marry or not, it is nevertheless true, that in some provinces only a certain number of Jews can be allowed to marry, and this restricted population is confined to narrow limits, beyond which no one is permitted to dwell; and should any one violate these laws, he is dealt with as a malefactor against some wise enactment. But what need is there to prove the injustice which is rendered

* Since this was spoken Russia has repealed many of its brutal decrees, Austria has been liberalized, and Prussia, Germany, Italy, and Scandinavia have yielded to the revolutionary spirit of '48. Will it remain so? July, '27.

to us? have we not cause to complain even in countries comparatively liberal, that the rights of citizenship are denied to professing Jews, whilst the door of preferment is opened wide to apostates who sell their birthright for a paltry office, merely that they may bask in the sunshine of a worthless court-favour?

All this proves (and I could have added much more, were it not that I fear to detain you too long) that as Israelites we have an additional cause for thanksgiving, that it has pleased our almighty Father to assign to us this land as an asylum from oppression, where we may mingle with the other citizens as their equals in constitutional rights, as their equals in love of country and devotion to its institutions and laws. This is emphatically the land where Israelites in their captivity can dwell securely, whilst its liberties remain uninjured by popular violence or by tyrannical usurpation; here the spirit of Judaism can shine forth (as far as this can be out of the limits of the holy land, and without the temple whose rebuilding we hope for) without let or hinderance from the malign influence of political disqualifications; and here can we devote our energies to our moral and physical improvement, without dread of molestation from the other inhabitants. And, indeed, the moral influence of religious freedom in America has already been felt in other countries; for in France and Belgium no inequality is recognized any more for the sake of speculative opinions; Holland, true to its ancient liberties, has maintained the rights of its numerous Israelitish citizens; and England, though she has not yet removed the inequality among her people at home, has equalized in her colonies the Jew with the other

inhabitants; and soon may she extend this justice to all who claim the right of serving their native land in peace and in war, though they are of the ancient faith of Moses.*

But let us cast a look upon ourselves, and see whether we have acted in accordance with the motives of gratitude which rest upon us. God indeed has been most merciful towards us; but we must stand humbled when He comes to judge us according to our deeds. We have been blessed individually and nationally; as citizens and as Israelites; but we have done but little to prove that we feel that it is from God we have been blessed. Merit we have none to entitle us to all the kindness and the truth which the Lord has shown to us who ought to be his servants; but, on the contrary, we have often rebelled against the majesty of Heaven, and have vexed his holy spirit by our backsliding. Many a one has crossed the Atlantic with his staff for his patrimony; many a one has set out in life with only a small share of worldly goods; and still he has seen his stores increase daily, and wealth pour in upon him, far more than he counted on, far more than he needs for the supply of all his wants. Like Jacob, his wealth can be divided in two bands, and if one be lost, the other would be enough to answer all his reasonable desires. But, unlike Jacob, he has violated the law of Jacob's God in acquiring it; unlike the patriarch, he thinks not of the Lord in the day of his prosperity, he prays not to Him in the day of his affliction. It is mourn-

* This has been accomplished, and Jews now are Judges and members of Parliament in Great Britain. July, '27.

ful that we should have to pourtray thus the conduct of Jews, of those whose very descent, whose very sufferings ought to distinguish them as the devoted servants of the Lord, as the true followers of his law. But what is the use of deceiving ourselves? We cannot be called a religious community, neither in this city nor elsewhere. Let us not be offended in hearing the truth spoken; on the contrary, let us meet the issue like reasonable men, as beings accountable to an all-seeing Eye for their conduct. My words may be plain; but, brethren, honeyed speeches come not with a good grace from a faithful preacher; he owes truth to his flock, he owes truth to his Maker. In the name of Him whose words are our law, I appeal to you, I beseech you, to take a calm view of events passing daily around you. I ask you, is the Sabbath solemnly kept every week as the day of delight in the Lord, as a time of reunion in his courts? or do Israelites seek on that holy day their desires, pursue their business, and are absent from the house of prayer? Answer me, is the name of the Lord daily invoked in all the houses where we dwell, as was the good custom of ancient Israel? Speak, do you live in spiritual fellowship with your brothers? do you wish for union with them? does or does not forbidden food stand on your tables? are or are not the eyes of the observers offended by the viands which they see offered to them in your abodes? "Yes," I hear you say, "we are charitable, we never let the hungry go away unfed, and when we see the naked, we clothe him. Is not this true religion? do we not thus honour the Lord?" Undoubtedly; and I have often had cause to rejoice over the prompt relief which has been

extended to the unfortunate, whether native or stranger, whether Israelite or gentile, who claimed your aid; and doubtless God in his goodness has watched your deeds, and will not withhold his recompense. I speak not of this city only, but of all other Jewish communities over the extent of the land; for charity is their peculiar characteristic. Still, thus you observe but one of the commandments: whereas the Lord demands of his servants an entire surrender of the will, that they may "walk before Him and become perfect." Do you say, that six days' time does not suffice for your labour? that you cannot devote to rest the days which our religion demands? Let me beseech you to reflect, that many of our forefathers, when all did rest on the weekly Sabbath, actually acquired large possessions, which they transmitted to their children; the blessing of the Lord of the Sabbath was with them, and they prospered in their undertakings. In modern times, we have with pain been compelled to witness many a day of rest disregarded; but have our possessions become enlarged through this means? is there a greater degree of solid prosperity among us according to our increased numbers than in former times? Assuredly not; and those whose years allow them to speak with knowledge will, I am sure, bear me out in the assertion that as a community we are not richer than under the ancient strict observance of the Sabbath. And even were it otherwise, still this would be no argument for offending against the commands of the Lord. We have been greatly blessed in the enjoyment of so many mercies, which we have not deserved; our own hearts, therefore, should yearn to return thanks to the Lord:

and how can we better thank Him than by obeying his precepts implicitly, whether our advantage be secured thereby or not? For how soon must all glory fade, and how soon will the hoarded wealth be left to new possessors, who neither toiled for it, nor will remember in gratitude the one who left it behind. And who would not value the joys of a holy life, which sought the glory of God above all things, in order that the spirit might be fitted for a purer world, where all wishes will be gratified by the Father? where all will be fed by his delights? And why, again, will we, for the sake of carnal joys, of mere animal appetites, trifle away our share of futurity, which to us can only be given as servants of the Lord after the standard of Israel's sacred inheritance, the legislation of Sinai? Salvation is the portion of all righteous gentiles, as we are taught, though they obey not the code which was not given to them. But, I repeat it, Jews are not thus securing the happiness of their souls; they must acquire it through obedience to the law, and this, obedience in *all* things, even unto the end.—And this is the country where we can be Israelites in truth. Here no one can molest us in our observances; it is here, therefore, that we should display obedience in all its bearings, and distinguish ourselves in our conversation and acts as true followers of the ancient fellowship of Jacob. In this all can join; whether we are rich or poor, whether we drew our first breath on this side of the ocean or thousands of miles beyond it; for we all are children of one stock, inheritors of the same birthright, servants of the same God by the same revelation. Let no one, then, be wanting to show the due obedience to the ancient legacy, and let

him purify himself, and help others to become pure likewise. If, then, this day of thanksgiving has been, under Providence, the means of awakening a new feeling of religiousness among our congregation: how happy will be the recollections its future recurrence will call forth; it will be a new link to bind us to those political institutions under which the inhabitants are accustomed to look towards the God whom the Bible reveals (although they all do not worship Him as the One Eternal) as the Source of all blessings, as the Being to whom all our thanks are due.

And, O! God of truth! bless in thy mercy the liberties of this land, give them permanency and abiding strength; preserve the constitution which secures equal rights to all; and inspire the hearts of the authorities and the people with wisdom, that they may deal justly and truly towards each other and all the nations of the earth; that peace may dwell within these borders, and the sound of strife not be heard within their limits. Shed on us also, the children of thy covenant, the spirit of meekness and piety, that we may subdue our hearts to thy service, in order that we may, enjoying liberty of conscience, and unswayed by fear of persecution, devote our hearts to thy service, to adore thy ever-blessed Name in sincerity and truth—even unto that hour when thy salvation shall be displayed before all the nations through the redeemer whom Thou wilt send, as Thou hast spoken through thy prophets. Amen.

Kislev 28th. } 5604.
Decem. 21st. }

DISCOURSE IX.

ON MIRACLES.*

No. IV.

FATHER! wilt thou hear when thy children call on Thee? Thousands of years have elapsed since thy greatness redeemed thy people; and many have been the sorrows which have since passed over their heads, and full often has the weight of affliction bowed down their spirits. But whenever the evil came hitherto upon them they looked towards Thee, their Redeemer, and their hope was not in vain; for Thou aidedst them, and they were delivered from the hands of their adversaries. By this means too they were brought to look unto the words of thy law, to be instructed and quickened unto everlasting life, which thy wisdom had set before them. O Father! wilt Thou hear us now also when we call? The sword of the enemy has been sheathed, the stake smokes no longer with the flesh of thy devoted servants; but discord threatens thy household, and what vain men term the progress of enlightenment has brought disunion among the children of Jacob. Each one strives to make his own opinions prevail as the just interpretation of thy law, and each man wants to excel his neighbour in worldly importance. O great is the sorrow which thus rests upon us! dire foreboding of evil thus threatens thy

* See vol. iv, for Nos. 1, 2, and 3.

heritage! Do Thou, then, O Father! hearken unto our voice, fill our hearts with humility, that we may listen to instruction; frustrate the counsel of the wicked who dare to lay violent hands upon the sacred ark of the covenant; and cause the love of the truth to grow powerful in our hearts, that we may hear and obey, listen and follow the dictates of the religion which Thou, O Lord of all! hast bestowed as the guiding-star of Israel's sons, by which alone they can truly serve Thee, Everlasting God! who alone art their Creator, who alone art their Father, who alone art their Lawgiver, King, and Saviour. Amen.

Brethren!

Let us recur to the wonder-working power of the Almighty. In a former series of lectures we proved that from analogy we must conclude that miracles, as such, though strange and wonderful, are by no means impossible; for they are within the scope of divine possibility, whatever they may be as regards the power of man. At the same time we stated that a miracle is no attestation of any given truth; but that a thing untrue in itself would remain so, notwithstanding a miracle should be wrought, by one having the power to do it, in proof thereof. We brought biblical texts to exhibit the correctness of these positions, and with this we rested; since to Israelites Holy Writ must be and is conclusive argument in all matters of faith and duty. We have, therefore, three positions as proved: first, miracles are possible to the Divine Power; secondly, such acts have occurred when it comported with Supreme Wisdom to produce them; and thirdly, miracles are no proof of any thing which

contradicts the evident words and doctrines of Holy Writ, these being the primary evidence of God's will and his views of truth.

Let us now see what is the object of producing a miracle? and when does it become necessary to exhibit an act against the ordinary course of events? When we cast one look into the regions of nature, with all its hidden powers, with all its wonderful combinations, we must come to the conclusion, as we have said on a former occasion, that nothing can be more miraculous, or, in other words, exhibit more the power and greatness of God, than outward nature itself; "in his temple all speaketh glory," and in every point of our inquiry we must stand mute and astounded concerning the greatness which we can only adore, which we can only view from afar, without diving below the surface of what strikes the eye. The powers of nature moreover have received such a strength, such an abiding endurance, that they were able to go out upon their mission at the commencement of all things, and to continue in their action without being diminished in the least, or failing in any one instance in their appointment. The night comes whenever the sun disappears, and as the earth revolves farther in her orbit the light of day again is spread abroad, and the luminary which rules the day scatters around effulgence and heat. During the hours of darkness the exhausted vigour of animals and plants is renewed, and the light and heat of day quicken and mature whatever germs there are implanted in the nature of vegetable products and animated beings. At length when every thing has fulfilled the course assigned to its existence, it passes

away from amidst the living, and its kind is reproduced even from the decay which overwhelms itself. We call the change death, we call it destruction; but do we understand the manner of this death or destruction? are we familiar with the avenues of life, where the new existence begins of the thing which supplies the place of what has gone before it. And when man passes away, when his body moulders in the dust, and his spirit is no longer active on the face of the earth—is his existence then at an end? Does he not rather continue to live in a new and purified state where all is bereft of mortality and pain? And independently of this, the fruits of the spirit never die. A word is spoken, a thought is breathed, and a fire is thereby kindled which never is quenched; and they who have lived at the beginning are still felt in the acts of remote ages, and the chain of all intelligent beings is so linked by the inseparable though invisible connexion which unites all in one, that the discoveries, the actions, the words of those endowed with intelligence continue, and must continue, to affect the life of thousands who are to come after them.

It is thus that nature, itself a riddle to us, is the greatest proof of the power of God, if even we confine our search to the small portion of the world on which we live, the earth namely, which has been subjected by divine Providence to the control and habitation of man.—But if we ascend higher, and view the countless worlds which revolve on all sides around us; if we consider that all these are the works of our Master; and that farther yet than our eye can reach, there are others and others yet; and that in all and

each there must be creatures adapted to the soil, to use this word, in which they are placed; that every where too there is a chain in the existence of things as we find it in this earth:—who will then set limits to the power of the Lord, who is Author of all this glory, Master of all this wealth? who will say what is within his scope? what He is able to accomplish? Yes, the deeper we enter into what the Lord has done, the greater will be our reverence for his infinite power, the more ardent will be our veneration for his goodness which He manifests, in caring in detail for each and every one of the creatures which have sprung from his beneficence and power.

But it must be observed that reflections like these are not the usual results at which common minds arrive; mankind, as such, seldom reflect, and all are engaged in their daily toils, in pursuits of pleasure or gain, and enjoy the bounties of the Creator without turning their thoughts to consider that it is to Him they are indebted for all they have received, and that his Providence can resume the gifts whenever it comports his wisdom to do so. And whenever an individual acquires wealth, wisdom, or renown, he blesses himself in his own heart, and says that it is his own power that has rendered him great; he values himself on his foresight which saw clearly that large gains must follow upon his enterprise; he boasts of his strength of mind and his persevering studies which brought large accessions to his wisdom, which rendered him famous among the learned; or he ascribed to his skill and daring that others acknowledge his political superiority, and that victory was his handmaid in a thousand battles. And nations—

do they too not boast of their success? where does history transmit us the account of the doings of any people but that they ascribed all greatness to the enterprise, the sagacity, and the valour of their forefathers or of themselves in the pursuit of wealth, of intelligence, and of power? How few are there who view the Creator as directly rewarding with prosperity those of his children who have found grace in his sight? How seldom are hearts overflowing with gratitude even when lips profess to utter praises unto the Most High God? How few are there who in sincerity feel their dependence and acknowledge themselves servants who should obey their Master? children who should listen to their Father? recipients who should thank their Benefactor?

Ay, in truth, we are so accustomed to be witnesses of the power of God, that we fail to remark the wonders which lie stretched out before us in their infinite variety: we are so used to be blessed with his bounty, that we do not feel that we are debtors. But should a sudden, or unexpected thing be brought to our notice; should something occur of which we have not dreamed of before in our philosophy, the case would be materially altered; for then our vision would naturally become sharpened and our intellect quickened to discover the source whence this event has sprung. But by a parity of reasoning we must come to the conclusion, that, if such events were to happen every day they would again, like the works of nature, lose their striking effect by the frequency of their recurrence. We have therefore this position in addition to those we advanced above, that a miracle, or an extraordinary and supernatural exhibition of the power

of God may take place, if it is intended to teach suddenly and strikingly a particular lesson, and to produce a simultaneous effect on the minds of a great number of persons, which effect is not to be of a transient kind, but to endure through its strikingness to be productive of consequences, long after its exhibition shall have ceased before the eyes of those who were the immediate witnesses.—Such a miracle is not unworthy of the majesty of Heaven. For what is the object of God in his dealings with man? Is it not to instruct? to improve? to render happy?—If the ordinary acts of power and goodness, for some cause or the other, do fail of doing this: why may not extraordinary acts of grace, which are no more difficult for Him than to let the sun shine, be brought forward to develop more clearly his omnipotence and his mercy? Let us take an instance: in the beginning of the creation we are certified that the Lord made his will known to the first man, after having endowed him with an intelligent soul, and given him dominion over all the earth. This being, in despite of this mercy, neglected the only command which had been given for his observance, and he incurred the divine displeasure by his disobedience. Ages passed on, and the belief in the existence of one Supreme, though it had been from time to time recalled to the knowledge of man, was fast sinking into utter oblivion in the contest waged against it by false ideas of the divine Being, supported by the rule of tyrants on earth. How should mankind of their own accord be able to arrive again at the sublime truth which is the foundation of pure religion? You will perhaps say, that the progress of civilization would have caused this.

But herein you would be mistaken. For if the highest perfection in architecture and the kindred arts is an evidence of high civilization, Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, must have stood high in the scale of mental culture: and still, though the arts, and sciences, and refinement had progressed from small beginning to a glorious exaltation, the idea of a multitudinous crowd of divinities was the prevailing sentiment in all these countries; absurdities, which no child would now believe in, were the themes of philosophers, orators, and poets; and what is more, the more the knowledge of these people was extended, the more triumphs they achieved in the arts, the greater became the number of their idols, the greater became the number of temples, of images, of statues, which they erected to their abominations. Some few, no doubt, had a suspicion that their system was false, their ideas of the Deity erroneous; because they must have perceived things, which their own hands had made, were not able to lend any aid to those who had hewn them out of stone, or fashioned them out of wood, or had molten them out of metals. And there where the grossest idolatry did not prevail, men worshipped the host of heaven, and bowed down to the sun, and the moon, and the stars, the works merely of the great Creator. Again, if these too had suspected that there must be a Being greater, higher, holier yet than the objects of their worship: how could they have arrived at the truth, without a painful, slow, and uncertain course of reflection, which after all must have died away with them, as had done the first knowledge of God which mankind had received?

We now wish to ask of every candid mind, Was it

really a thing unbecoming the Deity to work such deeds as should fix the knowledge of his being permanently, indelibly upon the minds of mankind, so that in no future age the progress of debasement should ever blot out his worship from the heart of his creatures?—Surely it was every way worthy of his benignity to do so; for He, who gives life to all that exists; who feeds all creatures with his bounty; who gives them understanding in things which concern their physical wants, must hold it worthy to impart to them that which will invigorate their souls with those elevating thoughts which will accompany them, like a protecting shield, through the joys and sorrows of life, even unto its termination by the palsying arm of death.

That this event took place, that this great wonder was witnessed, we are told in the Bible, and this is enough as evidence that it did occur; and what is more we feel that this is actually true. For look, I pray you, upon the state of our ancestors when they left Egypt: they had been slaves for about two centuries, treated with the most malignant cruelty, so that they even would not listen to God's messenger because "of the heavy labour;" they had been brutalized almost by a constant intercourse with the coarsest idolatry; yet these were the very men, who all at once became a nation endowed with a wisdom, with laws, with a conception of divine things to which centuries have not been able to add one single, solitary idea. It is no boast, it is no idle vaunting; the words "I am the Lord thy God," and "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the Lord alone," are unimprovable by the researches of the philosopher, they are the

astounding key to all the mysteries of nature, they teach us that there is a Creator of all the things which the imagination can conceive, and that He is one, uniform, everlasting, unchangeable. The effect was produced in a moment, millions were taught at the same instant of time; all the preparatory wonders were but a preliminary to this great act; all the subsequent deeds of power, but confirmatory of the august covenant; and the permanency thereof has been proved in all ages, even to this hour, when we are assembled as descendants of the recipients of the law to worship the Lord God, the One Eternal in this house which is holy to his Name, which is devoted to his memorial, blessed be it forever.

We come now to the inquiry, "When does it become necessary to exhibit an act contrary to the ordinary course of events?" This question has been already partially answered in the elucidation of "what is the object in producing a miracle;" for, in discussing this subject, it is almost impossible to separate the ideas so distinctly as we might wish. But let us consider the subject we wish to elucidate without farther preface. Persons who affect to disbelieve the history of the Bible have asked, "Why does not God produce miracles now, at this very day? why are we referred to the dark ages of antiquity for proofs of his greatness?" We will attempt to answer. We have already stated above, that if miracles were of daily recurrence, they would excite our attention to no greater degree than the equally wonderful phenomena of nature, which have no attraction to the casual observer, and fail to impress the learned even with the exalted ideas of the being of God which their

greatness ought to call forth. It is therefore in the nature of extraordinary events that they should happen but at great intervals of time, although, when they do occur, they may follow close upon each other, so as to produce the effect which is desired of them. And when once the effect has been produced, it would be an idle parade of irresistible power to exhibit miracles which could have no useful result. Now examine the Bible and see when did the miracles recorded take place? Always when the religion of Heaven needed confirmation, or to keep alive those who had been delegated as its depositaries. After the creation we have no record of any miracles, if we leave out the evident revelation which Adam and Cain received, till the days of Noah. Then we have the flood, the great lesson to prove to the world that mankind, as such, are responsible to God for all their deeds, and this took place when all had forsaken the law they had received. Again was the world without signs, till the speech of men was confounded, when they endeavoured to counteract the will of God.—Darkness soon after began to prevail over all the earth; and then too commenced the building up of the true faith, through the calling of Abraham. But with the exception of the revelation vouchsafed to him, and the answers to his prayers, there was no miracle wrought in his days or that of his immediate successors, unless it be the destruction of Sodom and its accompanying circumstances, and the birth of Isaac. But when the people of Abraham was ripe by its education for the reception of the law, the manifestation of the divine glory became evident and frequent, in order to build up that faith which was to endure forever. But after

the redemption of the people from Egypt they had to undergo a long and constant schooling to root out from their hearts the love of idols to which they so pertinaciously clung; and it was only after a gradual slaying of a whole generation through a forty years' wandering in the wilderness, that a nation of true worshippers was established. After the death of Moses but few miracles are recorded; but they were of that kind to demonstrate to the Israelites, young Israel as we might call them, that the Providence which had redeemed their fathers did not slumber, and that it had not forsaken them with the demise of their great teacher. Years passed on, and the example of surrounding nations, and the proneness of the human heart to sin caused our fathers to fall off from the service of the Lord. They were then yet comparatively new in their calling, the truth had yet scarcely dawned upon the world without; and occasionally during the space of four hundred years a striking deed of divine power proved to the people of Israel and the enemies who oppressed them, that the religion of Sinai was under the special protection of the Most High, the Creator, and that neither the sinnings of its professors, nor the triumph of their adversaries should be able to wipe out its memory from the seed of Jacob. Read for yourselves, brethren, and you will be convinced that the books of Judges and Samuel record miracles only at the very moment, when the degeneracy of the times had brought about the necessity of a striking illustration of the divine power, and upon no other occasion.—After this a house was erected as the special residence of the divine glory: and should not the Lord manifest his

presence among his people by some tangible demonstration that He dwelt indeed in the midst of them? This structure however was scarcely finished, before the Israelites became careless of their happiness, and they fell upon the ways of idolatry, and the land was defiled with their abominations. Religion was now threatened with its greatest enemy; for we were a people yielding themselves to voluptuousness, with a government fanning the embers of apostacy. It was therefore that the servants of the Lord were empowered to do great things, and to counteract, by the potent spell they had received, the wickedness and the daring which prevailed around them. Yet these miraculous men were few, and their acts exceedingly limited; still when Elijah had proved that the God who answered with fire was indeed the God, the people fell upon their faces, and exclaimed, "The Lord is the God, the Lord is the God!" Indeed this was a second manifestation of the glory of the Most High, and Carmel became, in a minor degree, to the assembly which met there at the test-sacrifice of the prophet called the Tishbite, what Sinai had been so eminently to the whole people under the guidance of the son of Amram. Since the days of Elijah very few miracles are recorded, and these were chiefly those of his immediate successor, the son of Shaphat, who nursed the declining flame of faith under several apostate kings; the cure of Hezekiah; and the saving of the three Israelites who had been cast into the fiery furnace for the sake of the upholding of their faith, and the miracles recorded of Daniel, all calculated to demonstrate to the captives and their rulers that the ancient faith was yet the favourite of Heaven. With

these events the miracles have ceased, and with them, too, the necessity for them has terminated, as far as Israel was concerned. The religion of Moses had been promulgated under great signs; those who divinely inspired taught doctrines in conformity with the law, they who are known as prophets, seërs, and those endowed with the holy Spirit all approved their mission, whenever the case demanded it, by the exhibition of deeds beyond the ordinary power of man to accomplish. With the building of the second temple the love for idolatry was forever banished from Israel. Just as the last words of the later prophets died away, when the spirit of prophecy was to be silenced for many centuries: the mission of Abraham, of Moses, of David and their associates was completed for Israel; the law and its doctrines had been expounded and enlarged by the prophets, its spirit was breathing in the Psalms, the Proverbs, and Job; its soul was speaking in the songs and lamentations; its application was carried out under Ezra, Nehemiah, in Esther, Daniel, and Ecclesiastes, as before in the earlier historians, and it became henceforward part and parcel of our being. The Scriptures were thus ours by inheritance and right of possession; and dominion was given unto us forever to study the Word, and to regulate our life by its commandments. Where was then occasion for farther manifestation of the miraculous power? what new thing was to be fixed in our heart? That for which the miracles had been wrought had been and yet is affirmed, and they had thus answered the whole purpose of their creation, equally with the world, the entire universe which the Lord had called into being.

Yet say, Is not the preservation of Israel a standing miracle? The destructive action of man upon the things of external nature has not been more persevering, than that of mankind at large against the law of Moses and its followers. We need not to enlarge upon this: you all know it, you all have felt it. But as the works of nature stand unmoved, though destruction of particles thereof is constantly going forward: so does Israel stand upright, unshaken, undestroyed and indestructible, though a thousand enemies constantly assail its ranks, and bear off individual apostates to their standard.—Ay, the miracle is of daily recurrence; but is it therefore less a miracle? And we have ever proclaimed the unity of God, have declared that in that faith we will live, that in that faith we will die. And has not the blessing of God been with us, and strengthened our resolve? fortified our souls in the moment of trial, on the day of peril? What more could a thousand miracles do, were they to be wrought now—this day—this moment—before our eyes? They too would be transient, for this is the nature of things; and the lesson would have to be repeated from day to day without intermission, and thus miracles would cease to be miracles from the very necessity of the terms.

No, my friends! Israelites require no miracles; their very existence, their very law are facts, the produce of supernatural manifestations, which to them prove a call to godliness, which reclaim them ever and anon when they swerve from the path of truth. Yes, let us be sinning, ever so grievously: the law stands unshaken, a sign and a testimony against us; and there never will be wanting those who, feeling

the love of God in their hearts, will gather round them followers ready to cling with renewed affection to the doctrines of the Most High.

But one thing more and we have done for this day. No more than the spirit of God is extinct because it speaks no longer through the prophets, is the power of the Lord abridged to work his will in all the world. The prophetic fire is but dormant, it will blaze forth again to enlighten the world; equally so is the miraculous power only hidden to astonish the more, when the time to remember Zion shall come.—Israel has been taught to know the Lord; but the gentiles yet walk in darkness, they worship not the universal Father, whom Moses proclaimed in his glorious mission. Shall it be, that the light shall never be theirs? that the works of God shall always be wanting in perfection? Far be this—it cannot be.—But as we have been taught, so shall the whole earth be instructed; truth will spring from the ground, and righteousness will look down from heaven; and on that day miracles will be summoned forth to prove to all that the Lord reigns, and that his alone is the dominion. But this too will be by means of a messenger, one whom God will send; again his servants will be foremost amongst nations, glorious as the sons who call Him Father. Thus will be fulfilled the words of the prophet:

כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים אראנו נפלאות :

מיכה ז' טו' :

"Like on the day of thy going out from Egypt, will I show him wonders." Micah vii. 15.

When the end of the reign of error shall have arrived, the means to dispel it will not be wanting; in every place it will have, though unwillingly, to yield to truth, and false systems of faith will stoop, will fall before the word of the Lord, as did the idols of Egypt when the Lord smote all first-born and executed judgment upon the abominations of that land. When will this be? No eye of man has seen the end, it is buried in the recesses of the future, hidden from our view. Yet the shadows are lengthening as the day advances; one error sweeps away the error which preceded it; until at length, the fallacy of all things not springing from the inspiration of God will be proved. It will be then that all flesh will yield obedience, willingly, cheerfully, truly to Him who lives for eternity; and then, at that day and that hour will He be acknowledged One, and his name among all men will be the One Eternal, the Creator, the Father, the King, the Saviour of all. Amen.

Tebeth 27th. } 5604.
Jan'y 19th. }

DISCOURSE X.

THE COVENANT AT HOREB.

GUARDIAN of Israel! Thou who art ever ready to succour the needy in his hour of distress, whose attributes are goodness, mercy, truth, and justice, attend to our prayer which we pour forth in thy presence, relying not upon our righteousness but upon thy abundant grace which is ever prepared to receive those who come to seek shelter under the wings of thy providence. In the days when thy glory purchased our fathers to be thy people, Thou didst vouchsafe to become their God, and didst erect with them a covenant which was to endure forever. How happy would we have been, had we remained faithful to thy behests, true to thy ordinances. But we fell off from righteousness, we sought to gratify the lusts of our sinful hearts, and forsook thy statutes which are the sure springs of life. Therefore did thy justice bring the sword over our land, and it cut down multitudes that would not hearken to the words of instruction, and the covenant was avenged in the dispersion of the sons of Israel in every land. Still Thou didst not forsake the remnant that escaped, and Thou remainedst at all times the Protector of thy flock, remembering the oath which Thou hadst sworn, in the days of their espousals. O Father! be yet mindful of the covenant, and pour the spirit of grace and supplication over us, and dwell in thy potency within our

souls, that we may be obedient in all things wherein thy will has been revealed to us. And O! cast us not off in our wanderings, and fill the hearts of the rulers of the world with benevolence towards us, that they may not oppress the household of Jacob, and not inflict undeserved injury on those who have no Protector save Thee alone, Everlasting One! from whom all earthly gifts spring, and who art the Source of all power. O guide us safely through the tribulations of life, by thy grace upheld, by thy power protected, until that day when Thou wilt cause all nations to behold thy glory even through the redeemer whom Thou hast promised. Amen.

Brethren!

In the section of the law which we have read this day, we have a short account of some circumstances which accompanied the promulgation of the law, and among other matters it is stated that, to initiate the people in the newly given religion, Moses sacrificed a number of steers as burnt and peace-offerings, and divided the blood in two portions, the one he sprinkled as is usual with all sacrifices upon the altar, and the other half he employed to consecrate the people themselves, so to say, making their bodies a sanctuary of the Lord, after reading to them the book of the covenant, which they faithfully promised to obey and to execute. These are the words of the text:

ויקח משה את הדם ויזרק על העם ויאמר הנה דם הברית אשר כרת ה׳ עמכם על כל הדברים האלה׃

שמות כד׳ ח׳ ׃

"And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold it is the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these things." Exodus xxiv. 8.

Let us reflect upon this subject. What is man's duty whilst on earth, in so far as he is an accountable being? He is bound to avoid every act which could bring in its train any evil consequence, and to practise carefully whatever can be promotive of good. Now, the question recurs, how is he to know what is productive of evil? what of good? To this the philosopher would reply, whatever a sound reason teaches him to be the evil and the good, and that this guide will be sure to teach him at the same time the golden rule "Do to others what you expect of them." The sensualist would answer, whatever administers to our pleasures is good, whatever is disagreeable is evil. Others would find a reply each to suit his own peculiar views; but all, basing their opinions upon mere human invention, would agree on this point, that man's own reason is able to point out to him the true system of accountability. But it must be self-evident, that a guide which points out so many different roads, all professing to lead to the desired object, cannot be such a one as an inquirer after truth could follow with any degree of safety; since he cannot know beforehand what result, in so far as he is himself concerned, will follow from the course of action indicated by the vague and uncertain monitor which he is told to confide in. If this human reason were therefore the only principle of action, man could not be held accountable for his deeds; because this impelling motive is more or less extended in different individuals, and is accordingly no uniform standard of conduct, or it is

swayed by circumstances which warp the judgment of those even who are equally endowed. But it needs no argument to establish the fact that, without responsibility, mankind would be more unmanageable than the lower animals; for being endowed with reason, cunning, and artifice, each one would employ his natural gifts to advance his own ends regardless of the rights and wishes of others, unless he were restrained by the brute force of another. There might be indeed occasions when moved by pity he would yield to the entreaty of a fellow-man and forego his own will; but should his passions be aroused, and the weaker party appeal to his mercy at the moment of his violent indignation, no remorse would withhold him from wreaking his vengeance upon the offender who is subject to his power. No, the peace of society, the welfare of each individual, necessarily demand that every man should be accountable to a higher Power for all his acts, be they trifling or important, and that the sense of this accountability should be universally impressed upon the mind of mankind. And it must be evident to every one who thinks that, inasmuch as all created things owe their existence to the same creative Energy, all men must have received a uniform standard by which they are able to ascertain the measure of their accountability, and that, if there be any who are without this knowledge, such as these will not, as a matter of course, be amenable for the acts by which those actually informed would be punishable. The question now arises: "If human reason is not the measure of right and wrong, where shall we look for it?" To you, brethren, who are acquainted with the wisdom of God as displayed

in his word, the answer presents itself without any promptings from me; for you know that though your own reason, when unassisted, gropes in the darkness of uncertainty, it is, when under the guidance of the law of God, fully able to distinguish between right and wrong, and is by this means enabled so to act as to obtain the approbation of Heaven. The Lord has not left us to uncertainty as to what the path of righteousness is, but has provided for us the record of his will, out of which we can at all times and under every circumstance ascertain how we are to deport ourselves towards Him as our Maker, and how we are to act to our neighbour as our fellow-man; since in this record we are correctly informed of our relation to our Creator and to all those, who like ourselves have received at his hands the same wonderful organization of body and soul which we discover in ourselves. To those, however, who are not acquainted with the book of the will of God, the search must be painful indeed; since at every step during their existence they must discover, at once, that their mind lacks a development which of itself it is not able to reach, and by every new idea acquired by experience or self-examination, they are the more strongly reminded, that human invention, however extended and varied, must stop very far short of perfection.

We, however, who have during so many ages fairly rioted in the luxury of the divine light, have long since ceased to feel almost that it is a great blessing which we have received, and how exalted a lot has been assigned to us by the bestowal of the code given to Moses. We are born of parents who have themselves grown up in its knowledge, and their very

thoughts are tinctured with the inspiration of the Law; and we also grow up, and imperceptibly drink with every day of our life more and more at the refreshing fountain; and when we stand forward in the pride of manhood, with intellect expanded and our will fortified by the strength of virtue vouchsafed to us from the book of revelation: we are but too apt to ascribe the victory to ourselves, and to be unmindful of the humiliating confession that this too is a gift for which we ought to be thankful to the Author of all. But not alone ourselves are unconsciously blessed by this treasure; for all other men who delight in the possession of civilization, of sciences, and of morality, are indebted to the same source that we are; since from us the knowledge of a pure morality has gradually spread from the small commencement of the same in the plain of Chaldæa under Abraham's teaching, until now it covers with its sway the mightiest nations of the earth. What matters it that they deny the source? what need we care that the indebtedness to us is not acknowledged? enough that we know that, humble as we are, we have become the benefactors of the world, and that from us as a centre has spread that light, which the most exalted philosophers of ancient times were utterly unable to reach by their own unassisted studies.

This being so, it is but proper that we should have means presented to us, which shall always remind us, for our own sakes, that it was not our intellect which has acquired for us the spiritual treasures of the law, but that it is the highest Wisdom that has imparted them to us. This at once presents us with some cogent reasons why the Almighty thought proper to

let the announcement of his will be so much distinguished by a superabundant display of his glory. It was, namely, his object not to let the discoveries of moral truths be the work of ages, by which means they would have been ascribed to human ingenuity, but to shower them down, as it were, in one day, like a fertilizing rain, upon a thirsty world, whereby He wished to show that He alone was the Author of the statutes and ordinances of his law, in order that no man should exalt himself above his fellows by announcing these to them as his own discoveries. The Creator of our souls thus became our instructor and guide; and by this means, having shown us what are our duties on earth, He justly renders us accountable to Him for every act of our life. To Him, therefore, we are to look in our endeavours to understand our line of duty, or, what is the same, we are to study carefully the book which He has written, so that we may be wise in the knowledge of the divine truths there recorded. But when our fathers came from Egypt, they were unused to the rule of the law of Heaven; they had been steeped in the filth of idolatry, and had learned of the ways of the heathen nation in the midst of which they had dwelt. Their mind was thus warped, and yielded unwillingly to the new yoke which was to be imposed on it. Still it was requisite, in divine Providence, that at that moment, and through this people, the religion which was ultimately to reform the world, was to be promulgated, and firmly established. There are in truth many means at the disposal of the Lord to effect his will; but we need no argument to vindicate his wisdom for selecting the time and the instruments He

did, when He came to communicate his law, which He decreed to be everlasting. The event, if any vindication were required, would amply justify the act of Providence of which we are speaking, and the history of the world for the last three thousand years may be boldly appealed to, in order to satisfy the most incredulous that the descent on Sinai has not been in vain. God's thunders rolled on the morning of the annunciation, and to this hour they reverberate in the ears of all Israel. His lightnings flashed from amidst the deepest gloom that rested on Horeb, and at this moment they light up before our eyes the darkness of our earthly pilgrimage. His glory shook the wilderness of Sinai; and even now the reflection thereof refreshes the soul of his adorers, and guides their steps to the summit of yon immortal mountain where dwells the everlasting presence of God. His voice spoke then aloud to all the people; and on this very day the sound is not hushed, and every son of Jacob hears the undying words as they counsel him to look up to his Father in heaven, and to follow, undaunted, his guidance, though it lead him through the valley of the shadow of death. The visible marks of the divine presence affecting outward nature have indeed passed away, with the hour and the day when they were witnessed; but the record of them has not been taken from us; and whenever we sit down to study the book which has been written for our instruction and our improvement, we must, unless we are wilfully blind to the truths it contains, be irresistibly drawn to the conviction that it is the finger of God which has traced these characters for the salvation of mankind. Human wisdom would have con-

nected human glory with the laws we possess; but no trace of this kind is discoverable in our law. Every line is instinct with universal applicability; no man is placed above the level of his countrymen, all are alike in their accountability to the Lord; and whether it be the high-priest at the altar, the general at the head of the army, the chief magistrate in his seat of justice, the labourer in the field, or the beggar in the street, all are alike declared to be sojourners and strangers with the chief Authority of the land, and this Authority is no other than the Lord God, the Creator of all. Now this levelling of stations is not to abase the high, not to detract from the just merit of any one citizen in our state; but to raise the poor upon the great platform of humanity, to teach the exalted that their glory is a gift from on High, and to impress upon the humble that they too have been formed in the image of God, so that the first may not be lifted up above their brethren, and that the latter may not sink into that abject state of dependence on human aid, which renders them but too much the slaves obedient to the will of the powerful, and destroys in them that aspiration for holy things, which ought to distinguish all those who have a share in immortality, and have been taught by the wisdom of God whose image they bear.

Let us now recur to our text: "And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, Behold! it is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these things." The things spoken of are the duties of religion which the book of the covenant contains. When notified that the Lord would come and speak with them, to an-

nounce to them his will, all the Israelites unanimously answered: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do and obey." The whole nation avowed obedience to the same code of laws and ordinances, as all had been alike subject to the same slavery and been redeemed thence by the self-same outstretched Arm of divine omnipotence. Now, in the days of Abraham, when he was ninety and nine years old, the Lord appeared unto him, and said: "I am the God SHADDAY, walk before me, and be thou perfect." It was then that the Almighty made with him a covenant, because he had been obedient in all things and through many sore and severe trials of faith; and because that the Lord knew that he would faithfully enjoin on his household that they should "observe the ways of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice." The covenant on the part of the Majesty of heaven was that He would be the Protector of Abraham and of his descendants after him, to be their God unto the latest generation of man. On the part of Abraham and his descendants an act of faith was demanded, by which they were to prove whether they would walk in the way of the Lord or not. They were ordered to seal their flesh with the bodily and outward sign of circumcision, which should be the symbol of inward purification of the soul, and the sanctification of the spirit to the service of God. From all male descendants of Abraham, to their latest generations, the blood of the covenant was to be shed, that from their birth they might be marked as the purchased servants of the Most High God.—Abraham was thus consecrated through the blood of the covenant, marked to all futurity as the favourite of Heaven; and during the so-

journ of his descendants in the land of their servitude the observance of the same law kept alive in their minds that they were children of a mighty promise, given to their forefathers by the Creator himself. And when the great prophet was sent to them with the message that the Lord had thought of them, because of the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the people believed, and obeyed the Voice that summoned them unto freedom. Nothing but the power of God could have preserved them amidst all the hardships they had to undergo: this they felt; and they were therefore ready to follow his guidance into the desert on their journey to the land of promise, and to obey his will during their future journeyings as a nation in the field of history, to their latest posterity. We were, indeed, ransomed from the slavery of ungodliness, not less than from the servitude of the body to cruel oppressors, and we were appointed to be the standard-bearers of the Lord's covenant, a sign and a beacon to the nations of the earth. —But with the enlargement of the belief and duties of the revelation to Abraham, an addition to the covenant was necessary; a new impression was to be made, which should be superadded to the ancient faith already inherent in our natures; a farther responsibility was to be imposed on Israel, the accountability under a code of separation from the families of the earth, by other special ordinances beside the covenant of circumcision anciently revealed to Abraham. Moses was therefore ordered to summon the people to the foot of Sinai, and prepare them for the glorious coming of the divine Presence, which was to announce to them those laws which they were to obey. But not

an unwilling yoke did the Lord wish to impose upon Israel; they were at liberty to reject the trust if so they had felt inclined. Yet where was any room for doubt, for hesitation, at the moment when all the wonders were yet fresh in the memory of the lately ransomed people? They indeed felt that the Lord is the God, and they were anxious to be yet more indissolubly united to his love than they had been through the promise made to Abraham. Again an external symbol was called into service, to represent outwardly the spirit that dwelt unseen within. The prophet erected an altar, and set up twelve monuments after the number of the tribes of Israel, to represent that the whole people were by the legislation of Sinai to become practically connected, and be built up as the sanctuary for the glory of God. In this all Israelites were to be united; no one should be able to disconnect himself from the union which was the work of the Lord, and all should labour to do their utmost to promote the welfare and the permanence of the work so gloriously established. The altar having been built, the delegates of the people were sent to offer up national offerings in the name of the whole community; and whilst the fire consumed the sacrifices which had been consecrated in the name of the Most High, the prophet took the book in which the statutes of the Lord had been written, and read it aloud to the assembly. Again they assented, they for a second time took upon themselves the vow of obedience and fidelity, acknowledging thus the Lord as their Supreme Legislator and civil Head. To confirm this event, therefore, in their memories, Moses took the portion of the blood of the sacrifices which he had set aside,

and sprinkled it on the people. At their individual birth they had been marked servants of God, by the blood of circumcision; and now, at the new birth of their nation in the divine truth, they were again marked by the blood of the sacrifices, and they came thus under the covenant of obedience, consecrated, as was the altar of burnt-offering under the ministration of the priests of the Most High, to the service of the Creator, to be to Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, separated from all the world by the acknowledgment of the blessed UNITY, and the observance of the precepts which had been announced to them from the midst of the fire. And the Lord of all then also covenanted on his part, that He would ever protect the sons of Abraham who had twice accepted Him for their God, and would forever let his name be sanctified through them, though they might at times go astray on the paths of sin, and draw down upon themselves the punishment due to the infraction of the law and the forsaking of the covenant.

Whilst we were true to the law and the testimony, blessings and peace were vouchsafed to us as national gifts from the Creator, besides the tranquillity of soul which is the portion of each individual servant of the Lord. But when we rebelled, and went after the idols and abominations of the gentiles, the covenant called aloud for vengeance, and testified against us before the impartial justice of our eternal King. The protection which obedience had received was withdrawn for iniquity, and the peace was converted into warfare, and the blessing into curses. That what a world could not overthrow fell before the outraged covenant, and the people that under the rule of holiness would have

been a light to the gentiles, was scattered into every clime, and became a byword and a hissing to the sons of man. It was thus decreed that, with the increase of light which our reason received by the bestowal of the law, there should be required of us an increase of righteousness and a constant watching over our inclinations that they might not lead us into sin. Where, then, is Israel's safety? is it in joining the gentiles in their worship? is it in looseness of conduct? in neglect of the law? in forsaking the covenant? O no! in all these acts there is death unto Israel, there is tribulation, there is woe! No! we have received the statutes of righteousness, and in them we must walk. We have been blessed with rules of purity: let us then purify ourselves, and avoid every thing which could destroy in us the divine image which we bear. The law has been confided to our keeping: let us then watch over it with jealous care, and teach its precepts to our brothers, that they may love the heavenly legacy and walk in its light. And, lastly, the covenant of righteousness in which we have entered by the calling of Abraham and the assemblage of our fathers at the foot of Sinai —let us preserve it inviolate, sacred, undefiled, let it be a sign between us and the Lord, inasmuch as He is the Chief of our race, the Guardian, the Saviour of Israel, through whose righteousness alone all sons of Jacob can be justified.

When then the enemies of our peace endeavour to lead us away from the standard under which we have triumphed in so many trials, during so many ages: let us tell them that we may not forsake our God whilst He does not forsake us. What has preserved

us amidst all our wanderings? what has defended Israel from annihilation, when the world rose up to destroy and to slay? what is not the providence of the Lord? did He not assist us in every trial which would have consumed us, had not a preternatural assistance been granted to us in the hour of our need? And still we are invited to forsake our God! we are to turn traitors to the covenant which was instituted by Him, who is wise, good, and holy! With the law of God, which is our life, we are at times exposed to sin and its concomitant retribution: how much more would we be liable to every evil, were we ever to become traitors to our own peace, and seek the fellowship of the gentiles.—No, brethren, this must not, can never be. We may be inclined to swerve from the line of duty; but providential warning, even if it be the avenging sword, will recall us to our duty; for the covenant can never perish. The blood thereof is upon us and our descendants, just as it was upon our fathers; it can never be washed off, not even by apostacy from the Church of God; it will grace us even in the midst of iniquity; and when the time of redemption shall have come, it will reassert its triumph over all our brethren, and establish immovably the kingdom of the Lord in the midst of us. Yes, because of the covenant, the redeemer will be sent; because of the promise of the Lord, the captives will be taken from amidst of the gentiles; and because of the truth of God, the prophetic words will be fulfilled which say: "And for thee also, for the blood of thy covenant, do I release thy prisoners from the pit in which there is no water" (Zechar. ix. 11); and from all the places of their banishment will the ran-

somed flock to the newly raised standard of the Lord, when "The Everlasting One will appear over them, and his arrow go forth as the lightning; when He the Lord God will blow on the cornet (for the assembly of the lost house of Israel), and will go forth in the whirlwinds of the South." (14.) It will be on that day that all he earth will acknowledge one law, one covenant, and then indeed will the Lord be one, and his name One.—May this be speedily fulfilled even in our own day! Amen.

Shebat 26. } 5604.
Feb'y 16. }

DISCOURSE XI.

THE BLESSINGS OF RELIGION.*

O Lord our God, how excellent is thy majesty in all the earth! In the heavens above every thing proclaims thy glory, the holiness of thy name resounds from sphere to sphere; and the creatures of this nether world take up the theme until all creation utters forth one voice of praise, a simultaneous offering of humble adoration to thy memorial which is blessed for ever. Among the infinity of these servants we too have come to praise and to adore, oppressed by a feeling of our nothingness, of our utter inability to benefit Thee, by aught that the sons of man can render unto Thee, their Creator. Still it is thy gracious pleasure to listen unto the prayers of the works of thy own

* Spoken at the Sunday-school examination, March 10th, 5604.

hands, and to bend thy ear to the words of their supplication. O hear us then, our Father! hearken unto our prayers, which stream from overflowing hearts, that spring from the spirit's depths, a spontaneous offering unto thy mercy, all that the creature can render unto its Maker! Be present in the midst of us upon all occasions when we are assembled in thy name, and let all our endeavours in the pursuit of righteousness redound to the spread of thy kingdom and the permanent welfare of all thy children. Yea, let thy spirit be in the assemblies of the house of Israel, whom Thou hast called unto thy service; cause them to be quick in the knowledge of the things Thou hast ordained, and let them be instructed from the abundance of that light and that best of wisdom, which ever issue from the inexhaustible fountain of thy precious law.

But, everlasting God! we know the infirmities of our nature, the proneness of each of us to rise in his own estimation above his fellow-mortals; to deem himself exempt from acts of obedience which bind the humble in the bonds of faith and duty; wherefore many go astray after sin and transgression, and reap unto themselves a harvest of sorrow and tribulation.—And though we see the young cut down in the pride of youth; the man of wisdom stricken in the day of his mightiest achievement; the ruler among his people seized by the hand of death in the moment of his triumph: we but too often forget our own mortality, weening that the storm which overwhelms others will pass by us without injuring the fabric of our prosperity. O, do Thou therefore cause that the workings of thy power may reach our obdurate hearts,

that the lesson which thy justice teaches unto mankind may not fail of its beneficent effects upon all and each of us. Cause us to see thy finger in every act which thy mysterious providence works out so abundantly before our eyes; let us feel that it is thy hand which builds up, that it is thy hand which pulls down; that in thy blessing only we live, and in thy cursing we must die. So that whatever may be sent unto us, be it good, be it evil, we may be taught to turn ourselves unto Thee, to ask thy countenance, to acknowledge thy power, to humble our pride, to grow in humility, to become truly wise in meekness, strong in filial reliance upon thy aid which accompanies in every stage of their being those who place their trust in Thee.

And since without the knowledge which thy religion imparts to us we would go astray like the sheep that are scattered on the mountains without a shepherd: we pray Thee to make our minds intelligent to understand whatever Thou hast written for our instruction, and enable us to teach to others the truth which we have obtained, and to enkindle in their souls the faith that burns within ourselves. Let us farther beseech Thee, to cause the instruction, which these young Israelites have received, to become fruitful unto salvation, that it may enable them to guard against the snares of life, and to bid defiance to all temptation which at any time may threaten to withdraw them from thy service, for which thy providence has chosen them, inasmuch as they are the descendants of thy children with whom Thou madest a covenant to be unto them a God and to their seed after them. Let not thy religion be ever forgotten

by them, that it may be a testimony against them and us, if they ever swerve from the line of duty which Thou hast decreed for the children of Jacob. So that they may arise in later days witnesses of thy glory and of thy being, to continue for other generations, to the end of time, the knowledge of the truth which has come from Thee among the children of man; in order that thy name, O our Father! may be glorified on earth as it is glorified in the midst of the assemblies of angels, who proclaim thy power, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory."—O do this, not for our sakes, but for the sake of thy holy Name, which is profaned among nations, and which Thou hast said shall be glorified and known to all mankind at the proclaiming of thy salvation in the days of the son of David, whom Thou wilt send to redeem from a twofold bondage those who return from transgression in Jacob, and look forward to the time when Thou wilt reign alone in Zion, the King of all flesh, the adored Lord of all sons of men. O, may this be speedily fulfilled—Amen. Amen!

Brethren!

In the book of Proverbs, which contains, so to say, the experience of divine wisdom in the events of human life, occurs the following near the close of the last chapter:

שקר החן והבל היפי אשה יראת ה׳ היא תתהלל׃
משלי לא׳ ל׳׃

"Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; the woman only who feareth the Lord shall be praised." Prov. xxxi. 30.

The words of the text we have cited express briefly the qualifications demanded to give life its charms, and to decorate the responsible agents to whom the earth has been given with the insignia of the favour of the Most High. God has indeed bestowed gifts of a perishable kind, which attract by their strikingness the outward eye; but they are in truth perishing, passing away, whilst the eye still dwells upon them; and while we contemplate them in their highest perfection, they fade and mark still more strongly than their entire absence could have done our mortality and nothingness. The sprightly maiden goes forth in the pride of grace, which animation, youth, and health, cast around her pliant limbs; she attracts the gaze of many admirers, and the world is to her an open book in which she reads nothing but joy and happiness. Yet soon the destroyer comes; she falls into the snares of the flatterer, and her peace is shipwrecked; her jewels are torn from her brow, and she is left to wither in the total neglect of former admirers, as a cast-off flower, unheeded by all, trampled upon and spurned by many. Yes, mere favour and grace are deceitful; they bind the heart for a moment, and are then unnoticed if naught else enchains the affections; they fail to fill up the void which the absence of better attractions produces, and they soon cease to adorn their thoughtless possessor.

And beauty? ah, how soon does this perish. Behold her the observed of all observers, whither she moves admiring crowds pay the homage to her personal attractions; and she reigns triumphant amidst her companions; the glow of health mantles on her cheek; her brilliant eye flashes with pleasure, and she believes

life always the gay and beautiful scene which her mind sees now spread before her.—But "beauty is vain." The hand of disease has seized upon her frame, and her former friends fly from her presence as though she were the harbinger of death; and soon she recovers; but her former dazzling eye is dim; her dimpled cheeks are sunken; her lustrous skin is deformed with cicatrices of the pestilential disorder, and her flowing hair no longer drops down upon her graceful shoulders. And is she the once admired, the courted, the envied beauty? Even so; the hand of disease has taken from her what was in itself perishable, fading, and has marked the admired one as a child of decay and mortality. Truly, beauty is vain!

But there are other charms besides those of personal grace and outward beauty, which no change of circumstances, no sickness can destroy; they are the beauties of the soul, the grace proceeding from righteousness, which are undying as the source from which they spring, and they will bloom amidst decay, and flourish in the corruption of death. Also when the body itself shall have passed away, these possessions will not have been acquired in vain; since they will produce fruits, and be green and beautiful for unending days. For when the soul departs from this world, she is not accompanied by the gold, and silver, and precious stones which she possessed in this life, but by the grace of righteous deeds which she has made her own; and these will plead for her before the righteous tribunal of the Creator, and intercede for her that the sins, from which no mortal is free, may be forgiven. The treasures of the spirit, therefore,

will survive death even, at a time when all that has been prized so highly in life must be left behind, either annihilated by sickness or death, or to be possessed by others who toiled not for the acquisition.

Let it be understood, that no station can exempt a child of earth from the sufferings incident to human nature; "For dust we are, and to dust we must return." No one will therefore say, that righteousness will shield us from the ills which flesh is heir to; and no honest teacher of religion will for the same reason hold out the pursuit of piety as a probable means to acquire ease and competency on earth. There may be cases, and, rightly viewed, they are universally discoverable, where religious conformity brings, to use the words of Scripture, "length of days on the right hand, and on the left wealth and honour;" for obedience to the will of God does not preclude the highest attainment of worldly prosperity. But on the other hand it is not to be denied, that such pursuits make demands upon our time which are the reverse of an indulgence in leisure and amusement; they call for sacrifice of pleasure, of enjoyment, and agreeable sensation; whilst they order us to let wealth be disregarded if it can be got only by violating the ordinances of the Bible, whilst they bid us to give of our substance to the poor and to extend the helping hand to the needy. But a far higher object is to be attained by the exercise of piety, an object to which beauty, favour, wealth, ease and power are as dust in the balance. Yes, because we are perishable, we should enrich ourselves with that which can never die, nay, which, in the state of probation wherein we all find ourselves, will sweeten sorrow and teach us to submit

to the rod which is sent to chastise us in our presumption, that we of all men will be exempt from sorrow. We should be fortified beforehand to be able to resist the storm when it comes, be this suddenly or by slow degrees after a long warning; for come it will at one or the other period of our life, because no man descends to the grave, but his heart has felt care and sorrow, and borne afflictions silently and alone, without a human comforter, without daring to impart the cause of sadness which the spirit felt, unseen by stranger eyes in its inmost recesses. If even, which is hardly probable, there should be no ills of magnitude happening in any one particular person's life: there are nevertheless a thousand vexations, all minute and trifling enough, which for all that make up a sum of tribulations which test the temper, and demand as much forbearance as those greater evils against which a proud spirit loves perhaps to contend with the heroic fortitude of a well-regulated mind. But this much is certain, whether unhappy in great or in small things, there is no human being but feels daily the weight of his mortality, by which he is hourly reminded that his abiding-place is not here, that his happiness would not be materially increased though he were to live a thousand years.

Let us then early learn to seek the only remedy which has been mercifully provided, especially for us Israelites, in the possession of the religion of truth which the Bible contains. If we do not know already, then let it be impressed upon us, that in obedience alone there is safety from the wrath which follows in the wake of sin, that in looking up to the Lord of all

in everything we undertake is the sure refuge from the sorrows which everywhere surround us. Let us be only convinced of the truth of the trite saying, "Man wants but little here below;" for our wants, properly so called, but very little is required; if we have simple raiment, wholesome food, comfortable shelter, and are not too much oppressed by the care of providing for our daily wants, we have enough to satisfy all reasonable requirements for our personal gratification; if we have something over, which we can employ in doing good to those who are not so well endowed as we are, we have already more than our proper share of worldly things; and at length if our substance be so vastly extended that we can neither use it ourselves nor feel inclined to bestow it on others: our happiness will not be materially augmented, except what the mere pleasure of possession may afford, in having so much which we cannot use whilst we have it, and which will grieve us sorely when by some mishap it is taken from us again.—We should know that whatever our wisdom or industry may be, it is a gracious Providence that blesses our undertaking; and that, when losses fall to our lot, there is no injustice done to our merits by the Bestower of all gifts, who, when He deems it best, can resume what may be in his omniscience of no ulterior advantage to us. If any blessing should puff up our heart with pride, and make us look upon ourselves as better than other men, whom we excel, as we fancy, through our own exertions, in wealth, wisdom, or power; if by this means we are beginning to vaunt of our success as though there were no God by whose sufferance we have reached our high position: it is

surely best for our own welfare, that we should be taught that we are nothing more in the scale of beings than persons who are not by their own inherent power, but by the favour of Him who measures all our steps, a little more endowed with things which administer to our pleasures than others who bear like ourselves the stamp of humanity.—On the other hand let those who are humble, not be deceived by the apparent prosperity of the wealthy and the powerful, nor let them envy the renown of the wise, and the admiration which is rendered to personal beauty; the contented mind can dispense with all such gifts, especially when he reflects that, if he has his own sore trials to endure, each man, no matter what his received blessings may be, has an equal burden of some other sorrow which pursues him from his birth to the grave.

But all this proves how necessary it is for all men to have a prop which is to support them not alone in times of trial, but in every stage of existence; for even in the moments of the highest enjoyment the soul of man most deeply feels that it inhabits a mortal tenement, which the slightest accident will cause to return to its kindred earth. This prop is, I need not tell you, a thorough religious education, which is to smooth our path in our journey through life, from the cradle to the tomb.—Let us begin to impart this blessing as soon as the intellect commences to expand, from the moment that the child begins to distinguish between what pleases and displeases him. Let the first reasoning be about duties and obedience, in order that there may be no period to which the memory can revert, when unbridled passion was permitted to

govern the soul. From this simple beginning carry the mind up to the Creator; let the child know that he as well as you is a creature of an all-wise Beneficence, capable of a progressive improvement, destined for happiness in a purer state of existence. Make him sensible that there is a watchful Providence who is attentive to all our deeds, and that every human being is to be judged by his own acts, be they good or evil, as "for all these God will bring us to judgment." Let there be no interruption to this teaching; and when the foundation has been laid, proceed to unfold to him the whole system of duties which the Scriptures contain, and make it your pleasure to show by your own virtuous example, that you are sincere in your instruction, and then you can reasonably demand of him a compliance with the things you have impressed upon his mind. Let him, moreover, watch nature as he grows in intellect and knowledge, let him *feel* how omnipotent He must be who stretched out the heavens by his word, and set in the mightly firmament so many worlds, each of which is many and many times larger than the earth which we inhabit. Tell him, with the enthusiasm which the theme ought to call forth, of the many species of beings which this proportionately small earth contains; how man is blessed with reason, animals are endowed with instinct; how each race is fitted for its place of habitation; how useful are the individual plants which cover the surface of the soil in all their endless variety almost; how the very body of the earth itself contains so many mineral products all useful in their kind to the higher order of beings which has received dominion over all. Tell him, then, that neither you

nor he can make any return for all these blessings, but by a ready fulfilment of the duties which God's revealed word has prescribed, and by a filial reliance on his goodness and wisdom; and show him in your own person upon all occasions, that you also feel the full weight of this obligation, by being humble in prosperity and submissive in sorrow; by being candid towards the great and considerate and kind to the humble, insomuch as you respect yourself as one in the scale of responsible beings, and are willing to recognize the same in all other men. Hold up to Him the example of the virtuous, the constant, the devoted, of whom history speaks, or who may be found among your own acquaintance; excite in him a desire for emulating the bright deeds which shed a lustre on human nature, by pointing out their accordance with the will of God in whose service and name they were displayed. Bring him to the house of God; teach him to love the courts of the Lord, and to mingle in the congregation of the faithful who come to ask for that aid which they feel can come alone from on High; impress on his mind, to humble himself when he is sorrowing, to have confidence in better things when evil occurs, because that trials are the work of God, who wishes to chasten the feelings, and to bid the soul to rise from earth to heaven. If you have done all this to your child, and he has faithfully followed your guidance: O, then, have you fitted him to lead a happy life, and rendered him an heir of immortality; for then prosperity will not corrupt his heart, and adversity will urge him to cling, yet closer, to that Tower of strength, the Name of the Lord, whence alone can come our salvation. Much more might be

said; but what needs it to enlarge more on the subject? who of you, brethren, knows not, feels not, that faith and duty are the only true sources of happiness? Yes, you know this truth, your hearts respond to the sentiment, even when you transgress; for there is a witness within yourselves, the testimony of the Lord which his word has engraven on your spirit, which constantly whispers in your ear, "There is nothing true but God, there is no happiness, save in his favour."

If to man, as the sterner sex, the ways of religion are so necessary to insure his happiness on earth even: how much more must woman need this stay, this heavenly balm to fortify her spirit.—Man's sphere is the wide world; he has to hasten abroad to provide for the wants of his household, for those dear to his heart.—Grave subjects engross his attention, and the cares of life fill up his waking hours, and not rarely disturb his slumbers. O how wise would he be, were he to listen to instruction, and have God ever before him; but he has the world in his heart, too often for his happiness, and finds, or fancies he finds, consolation in his earthly pursuits. But woman's sphere is the domestic circle; there she shines, there she governs. Feeble by nature, she has to look up to man for protection, for countenance; strong only in obedience, powerful only in submission. Her destiny seems ever to be enduring, forbearing. At one time the adored, at another the slave of man. In youth and beauty her hand is sought by admiring crowds; neglected when wrinkles furrow her cheek, when sickness or age dims the lustre of her eye. What has she not to endure as wife, as mother! and

how little gratitude and obedience does she reap for all her pains, for all her cares. She is the benefactor of the human race; still where are the monuments erected to her memory? the records of the debt so richly due to her merits and her sorrows?—How much has she, therefore, need of that treasure which outvalues deceitful favour and vain beauty! O that she would but feel that her grace is heightened by religious meekness, that her beauty is purified and exalted, if she is decorated with the ennobling confidence in her merciful Creator! O that she may know how great, how truly great she is, when she can be praised as the woman who fears the Lord! How sweetly then does wisdom drop from her lips, how beneficently does she govern the household, persuade perchance an obdurate husband, leading him through mild reproof a penitent to the footstool of Mercy! How holy is then her instruction, by which she draws her children unto the embrace of the Most High, rendering them worthy to be numbered among the righteous who are to inherit the earth! What peace does then dwell within her own bosom, though deceitful friends forsake her, the once favoured one, and sickness or age rob her of the once bright tinge of beauty! What a treasure does she then bear within; her face all tranquil, whilst holy peace, pious resignation, unwavering trust, fill every avenue of her soul! Let her not be known beyond the limits of her own doors: no matter—she has nobly fulfilled her mission, she is the angel of life, for her own salvation, for the salvation of others.—This is her mission, this her destiny, to govern by meekness, to be strong in holiness, not by relying on external charms, which a moment can de-

stroy, but by yielding her whole being to the power of obedience, to all that her God demands of her, to become a light, which will attract those who come within the influence of her mild persuasion, to worship the Lord of hosts, whose favour is life, whose word is the source of all wisdom.

It is with such views of the importance of religious education for all classes (for in liability to sorrow and the enjoyment of pleasure all mankind are equal, whatever be their station), that we may justly hail institutions like this, the effect of which we have witnessed to-day. I do not say, that this is all which is needed: far from it; it is only a commencement of a great scheme; but this much no one will dispute, that it is a great step in advance above the general indifference to religious instruction so lately prevailing all over the land. We here see the busy hand of woman, noiselessly carrying out an extensive system of education, truly extensive—since so many individuals, of various ages, of rich and of poor, all partake of the same labours, aiming at the same end, the improvement of our children, to rear them up as true Israelites, and to render them fit to endure the trials of life, and to become heirs of immortality. Let the men of Israel mark the result, and let them too endeavour to extend the work so happily begun—so successfully, thus far, carried into execution, despite of the difficulties which have been necessarily attached to teaching but one day in the week, thus leaving no time to impart a knowledge of the holy language, without which no Jewish education can be perfect, and the fact that, where the teachers give their services gratuitously, it is hardly to be expected that the attend-

ance of pupils as well as their instructors will be as punctual and regular, as where the bestowal of *pay* can ask a more rigid accountability of those who have the charge of youth.—Let us not forget that the example set here, now only six years ago, has found imitators in many other cities; and there cannot be any doubt that, unless our people are totally dead to their holiest duties, the sphere of action will become more and more enlarged, till it cover the whole surface of the land, like a stone thrown into the water at length agitates the entire mass in constantly increasing circles.—To the teachers I have to say: "Persevere, and if you have been remiss in any one respect in past years, become more efficient with the increase of experience and more extended knowledge, since by teaching others you yourselves will become enlightened." To the scholars let me say energetically, that obedience to the commands of their superiors, attention to their studies, and decorum at school, are alone requisite to insure to them a great proficiency in the knowledge of that religion which is so beautiful a link that it unites man to his Maker, and is the only support in the hour of affliction.—And to the parents and friends of the pupils here assembled in the presence of God, I must say: "Your duty it is, and it should be your pleasure, to assist the teachers, not only by your gifts to support the school and to defray the necessary expenses, but by your countenance likewise; render their task as easy as you can, by superintending the studies of your charges whilst at home, converse with them on the subject of their lessons, illustrate so far as you can any difficulty which they may not be able to conquer unaided; but above

all show them such an example, that they may love the school, and follow you in paying obedience to the duties which they are taught there."

By such a course we may ultimately hope, that a desire for farther knowledge will call for more extended instruction; and I am sure that, as soon as this is the case, the means will be readily provided to diffuse still farther the blessings of a truly religious education, based upon the knowledge of that sacred tongue, the inheritance from our fathers, the glory of Israel.—Only let us be strong and of good courage, and we cannot fail. And may the Lord in his goodness direct our counsels, and cause much good to result from our labours, that his name may be glorified, and extolled among the sons of Israel his servants, from now unto eternity. Amen.

Adar 19th. } 5604.
March 10th. }

DISCOURSE XII.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

(FOR PASSOVER 5604.)

O THOU exalted and holy One, who dwellest with those who are humble in spirit, who art in the midst of the righteous though they be the lowly of the earth! we beseech Thee to let thy presence dwell in the assemblies of thy heritage, the people whom Thou didst redeem unto thy own glory and praise, that they might be full of thy knowledge and be a guiding-star to the

sons of man, leading them in lowly sincerity to the footstool of thy glorious majesty. O give us thy countenance, which is the only light unto salvation, and strengthen us, that we may be firm in action, when we pursue righteousness, and unwavering in resistance, whenever temptation threatens to allure us unto the path of sin. Be thus Thou our Stay and Teacher, our God and our Refuge of defence; that we may be able to live according to thy will, and be accounted worthy subjects in thy eternal kingdom, on the day Thou sittest as the Refiner of silver, and purifiest the house of Levi like silver and like gold, when Thou wilt call unto thyself those who are truly Thine, to abide in thy presence, even as the stars for everlasting, in deathless joy, in unchanging holiness. May this be thy will, O our God and Redeemer! even for the sake of thy own name which is fearful among nations. Amen.

Brethren!

When we cast our eyes abroad and behold the thousand ills which beset our course from our first entrance into the world till we leave it; when we consider that naked were we ushered into earthly life, and naked must we descend to the tomb: the mournful reflection forces itself unbidden into our mind that we were born for trouble and tribulation, and that life has not sufficient charms to compensate us for the multitude of vexations to which we are constantly subject. Let us begin any walk of life, any scientific pursuit, any mercantile speculation—and let our plans be ever so well laid, let our experience and forethought be ever so matured: some unforeseen

disappointment, some occurrence against which we had no means of guarding will frustrate our efforts, at the very moment when we believe ourselves on the point of succeeding. And even let us succeed; no sooner is our end gained than we are tired of the success, for which we have been toiling perhaps for years; fruition destroys, almost invariably, the excessive joy of anticipation; for all earthly things look larger when "distance lends enchantment to the view," than when a close proximity enables us to examine and to define their exact proportions.—Ask the man of wealth, who has been labouring for half a century to amass gold and precious stones, to fill his warehouses with the produce of the farthest India and the spices of the Eastern isles; whose ships come freighted with the fat of the monsters of the deep, and the peltry of the denizens of the forest; whose houses and possessions are scattered in town and country: ask him whether his desires are gratified, whether the longings of his heart are stilled, now, when he surveys his vast substance, to any greater degree than when he left his father's house, where poverty and an humble lot were his, to court the smiles of fickle fortune in a distant land. Then he was restless to remove the inconvenience of an humble lot, to overcome the pressure of poverty; and now, he feels the cares of accumulated wealth, he fears to lose his hard earnings, he fancies that he must amass yet more to preserve the fruits of his labour. And were it even that he be content, he experiences the languor of indolence, the want of something to do to occupy his leisure hours; he is now too old to enjoy, and still he cannot busy himself any more with those darling schemes which filled up

all the moments of his younger years. Is such a one absolutely happier, because he has wealth? Yes, he may boast of his acquisitions, he may bless himself in his heart, because he has succeeded where so many failed; he may ascribe to his own genius that he has extended substance, and heaps of gold, and herds and flocks that cover the plain and mountain, and ships that whiten the ocean with their sails; but inwardly he feels the sting, the unsatisfied craving for something which neither wealth nor success can supply; because peace does not result from a pursuit where every thing is made to yield to one absorbing, controlling thought.

Still this is the nature of man, not that he is, what may be termed, avaricious—that is, overfond of acquiring; but that he is endowed with an irrepressible restlessness which is not satisfied whilst something attainable is yet unattained. The God who made him endowed him among other impulses with that peculiar sensation, which will always incite him to thought, to action, and make him desire for a change of some sort, for a variety which a uniform pursuit, a uniform success, and uniform series of enjoyments could never satisfactorily fill up in his heart. Man was born for labour, for exertion; these are his natural elements, in which alone he can be said to exist; for indolence and leisure will always fail to amuse and impart health, as soon as one feels inaction and want of employment insupportable evils. Man is, accordingly, placed here to labour, to be busied in some pursuit, which will demand the sacrifice of his time and bodily energies for its proper execution; and hence, as soon as he is in possession of anything he ardently craved,

and which at one time appeared to be the height of his desire or ambition: he sees another thing, or he feels the necessity for some new acquisition, which has now become equally necessary for his happiness as those things which he craved hitherto, and which are now within his possession.

But mere worldly objects, call them wealth, power, or enjoyment, are so unsubstantial in their nature that, possess them in their utmost extent, you will still find that they have supplied not one of the desires for which your soul craves, for which she feels that she ought to be active. We do not wish to inculcate that there is any wrong in the idea of labouring for wealth or power, to enjoy the good things which the Creator has so bountifully supplied in every part of his creation; for if this were so He would not have provided substances which we could possess; He would not have allotted dominion to his favourites over their fellow-men; He would not have endowed all nature with objects which administer to our pleasure by delighting the taste, the sight, the hearing, the smell. It would be derogating from the goodness of the Lord to presume, that what He has so wisely and skilfully brought forth, were merely here to deceive and to mislead. No, brethren! we may enjoy life, and labour, with perfect ease of conscience for the obtaining of that, which will render us independent of the aid of others and place us in a situation wherein we may lead and direct our fellow-men through our example and precept. But we should take heed that we place not our reliance for happiness on these things solely; for thus we would transform the means into the main object of our ex-

istence. Only reflect how unsatisfied the richest man always is; how he fears of losing what he has amassed; how he labours to build up the fortunes of others, after all his wants are amply satisfied; how he, should he even cease from labour, finds the unemployed time hang heavily on his hands, because opportunity for acquiring more fails him, or because increasing infirmity of age denies him the strength for farther exertion. Only reflect how many mortifications attend the man of power at the height of his elevation; how many elements are always at work to pull down what he so toilsomely builds up; how impotent he is in the hour of sickness, or when death enters his abode. Only reflect how vain are our enjoyments; how the very use of our natural functions, in tasting to overflowing the cup of pleasure, renders us liable to premature decay; how the eagerness to live in the gay world destroys the happiness of the hours of solitude which the most courted, the most feasted individual must pass in his own chamber, however he may endeavour to be always surrounded with those persons and those appliances which he fancies can alone render life agreeable.

Were there even then no future, as some worldlings would gladly persuade themselves, they would still have cause to look elsewhere than in mundane pursuits for that SOMETHING (if it could perchance be found), which would add some true and substantial enjoyment to their favourite passion, be this the possession of wealth, of power, or of pleasure, which could sweeten for them the time of old age, of sickness, and of solitude, of those hours, when the pursuit of wealth becomes too burdensome, when power fails

to appease its nominal possessor, when pleasure refuses to gratify its votary.—But how frightful must be the reflection of all who are instructed that there is an hereafter, when the agonizing thought forces itself upon their conviction, that all their treasures are of the earth,—all their power only the fleeting kind which constitutes earthly dominion,—all their enjoyments only those which result from animal pleasures! Where are they to seek for that wealth which is imperishable? for that power which conquers even death? for that enjoyment which leaves no sting behind? Let them then turn to the Lord; for He is able to confer this wealth which we ought to desire, this power which is to sustain our sinking spirit, this pleasure in things imperishable; and He has provided them abundantly, without stint or measure, as much and more so than those goods which fade whilst we revel in their contemplation! O there is goodness in store for all who seek, for all who come! the doors are ready to be opened;—come ye only, all who are heavily laden, or ye whose step is light, whose shoulders unburdened!—come all—knock at the gates of mercy, and the portals will fly open—wide—to receive you, to let you pass unto the home of peace, of joy, of happiness—even unto the presence of the Lord, where dwells the light which shines for all, for ever, where is the life without end, duration unto everlasting.

Full often have preachers descanted on the subject; many is the time that the moralist has cried out Woe over the worldly delusions which he beholds around him; but still there is cause to continue the theme, to again utter that testimony in the hearing of all

which the prophets of old denounced against those who see themselves only amidst the sons of man, and who live as though to them alone the earth were given. The sin of selfishness was not witnessed in ancient times alone; the pursuit of worldly advantages as the chief end of life is not chargeable to the days of the prophets only: the same defects are witnessed now; man has not grown wiser as he has advanced in scientific knowledge; and therefore the warning voice has to be lifted up again, from time to time, to warn the people, to admonish them that their path is not leading heavenward, that they are defective in a correct apprehension of their best interest, that they are travelling on the road to perdition. Ay, the world does not listen, a deaf ear is turned to the voice of admonition; but what is that to the one who has received a commission to speak? is he to stand bargaining, as it were, for the amount of success which he claims as due to his persuasive eloquence, before he will consent to do the work of his mission? He may indeed feel his own unworthiness, be conscious how small the gift is which has been vouchsafed to him; but with whatever defects he may have to contend, be they inherent in himself, his station, or those among whom he is called on to labour in the cause, he cannot desist, with any degree of safety to his own happiness and future salvation, from proclaiming aloud that he has discovered transgression among those who ought to be faithful, that wrath is impending, unless that repentance and amendment follow soon upon the voice of instruction which is uttered aloud in the public ear.—Ay, who hears? who heeds? Alas the number is small! the words are spoken, their truth is

admitted, but the heart remains unmoved, and the heedlessness is continued as before, and sin is perversely pursued, as though it were the road of salvation, and the world is purchased at all risks, at every price, as if it could insure everlasting happiness. And he who warns his friends of their danger, the physician of the soul who would gladly snatch the brand from the burning, is denounced for his boldness, for his unwarranted daring, as men term it, to interfere in the private concerns of others. But to a moralist, sins publicly committed are not private affairs; they are poisonous exhalations which, spreading from the spot where they struck their root, carry corruption in every direction; and it is his province to oppose his strength, feeble though it be, to arrest the destroyer, or to force him back into his former limits. But if he should succeed in arousing the public attention to the imminent danger, if he should see the number of the anxious inquirers after salvation increase: let him not glorify himself at the result of his labours, as human pride is even in this holy work only too apt to arrogate to itself undue praise; but let him ascribe the victory to the Lord of his life, who thought fit to prosper his exertions in the cause of righteousness.

Let me therefore admonish you, beloved brethren! though you may perhaps with justice be able to turn the admonition back on myself, unworthy as I may be from many errors in my own life to censure others: —let me entreat you, to weigh well and prayerfully, whether as individuals or as a community, you do not place too high a value upon the things of this world, and esteem too lightly the everlasting concerns of the immortal soul. It has been said by those who are

not of our communion, and you can judge for yourselves whether with truth or not, that we are overfond of the pursuit of wealth, that in this we lose sight of the higher principles of an elevated religious conviction; that love for distinction will lead us to swerve from the path of the law of Israel, and that desire for imitation will induce us to copy the customs which are strictly prohibited in the Bible. Unfortunately we cannot deny the whole of these charges; in fact they are true in every essential; and to get money, mere money, we have neglected the Sabbaths and festivals of the Lord's ordaining; we hold temporal distinction of so great value that many deny their religion in order to secure it; and so much do we crave to be similar to the gentiles, that we are at times ashamed to avow our peculiar opinions, and copy in our conduct all the customs and usages of the world, although in so doing we act counter to the law of Israel. Such things are daily seen; and a casual observer, who might know nothing of the deep-seated faith of all Israel, who might be ignorant with how much tenacity the greatest sinner (I am tempted to say) among us, clings to the main principles of our faith, would be drawn to the belief, that speculative infidelity is becoming every day more prevalent among us, so little of a healthy religious spirit is discoverable in our conduct. But it is not speculative infidelity which is our bane; we are convinced of the truth of our religion, we value it, in expression at least, as the pure emanation of Divine Wisdom. Our course, however, may be termed, with the strictest truth, practical infidelity, or in other words, our actions are in opposition to our professed opinions: we with our

mouth say "we believe," and our whole conduct is a practical denial of our profession. What use is there in my believing that the Lord God is one, when the next moment I join in worship those who gainsay this fundamental truth, and believe in a plurality of the godhead? What benefit can result from my asserting that the Sabbath is a sign between God and Israel, when the next day I turn round and refuse to abstain from labour, because my resting might occasion me some pecuniary loss, by so much as abstinence would withhold from me? What beneficial result can accrue, either to myself or others, when I admit that the prohibition of certain articles of food is a wise institution, and of God's ordaining, when the next hour I let the least excuse be enough to induce me to partake of what I hold to be unlawful, or allow it to be placed on my table for others to eat, simply because such things are fashionable, and are put upon the festive boards of those who are not bound by the law? Independently of such things being sinful, they are ridiculous, unworthy of a man or woman endowed with the least share of common sense; for next in importance to doing whatever God has asked of us from a spirit of filial reverence, it is the duty required of every person who possesses a sound reason to act consistently with himself, and to let his conduct be an exponent of his professed principles. But we modern Jews do not do so. We profess a sincere belief—and show a heart overflowing with sin. And how mortifying is it to a sincere Israelite to be asked by a simple-minded gentile, who perhaps knows not how deeply his questions wound the soul, "How it happens that such persons, who

are also Jews, violate the Sabbath, attend habitually gentile worship? or eat the flesh of the swine, shellfish, and other kinds of food which other Jews and the Bible abominate?" What can one answer to such queries? but that the offenders have not been properly educated, or that they have been so long absent from the fellowship of Israel, as to become indifferent to religious observance. But how heart-rending is this confession! Jews estranged from their God by want of education! loving mammon instead of eternal life, because they know not that gold is perishable and that eternity is ever-enduring; that wealth must be left this side of the grave, whilst sin or righteousness bears fruit to everlasting! Israelites turn traitors to their faith, because they know not what the Lord has ordained for his servants; so that they swerve from the fellowship of Israel, and join themselves in worship and conduct with the nations of the earth! Sons of Abraham are so mingled up with the gentiles, so long absent from the house of God, that they have ceased to feel any reluctance in partaking of the "flesh of the swine, of the creeping things, and of the mouse;" have been so long absent from the house of their heavenly Father that they feel like strangers when they enter his sacred courts!

And why is all this? why does religion lack its votaries? Because gold is worshipped! because we bend the knee to the idol of sensuality! because we feel as though it were a shame to be known as Jews! O that our brothers, yea our American brothers, our brothers who belong in name at least to this holy edifice erected and dedicated to the worship of ONE God, —O that they might feel in its full truth, how unsub-

stantial all their worldly labours are, which do not tend to promote the glory of our Sovereign's kingdom! how utterly worthless are all mere sensual enjoyments over which the spirit of a saving faith does not preside! O that they might feel the joy of being Israelites, not merely by descent, a circumstance over which they themselves could have no control, but in spirit, in thoughts, in words, in action! How would they then cling to the hopes which have never failed, to the truth which has never deceived: yes, then would they love that faith which sees the perfection and end of all things in the wisdom of God from whom we have sprung; they would then learn to lean upon Him, in all troubles, in all joys; they would then be glad in his salvation, inasmuch as He ordained life in the observance of his just precepts; they would then overleap all barriers which covetousness, worldly pride, unworthy ambition, place in their way, and bar unto them the outlets of salvation; they would then be glad to dispense with useless wealth, with senseless pleasures, with vain strivings, the end of which is sorrow, which lead to temptation, from temptation to sin, and from sin to endless misery. For behold! two roads are open to us, the road of life in the law, salvation through obedience,—and the road of death through sin, condemnation through refusal to obey. Each of us is placed, every moment he lives, at the junction of these diverging roads; every moment, I say, for we can enter the path of righteousness whenever we please, though we have sinned; the road of evil also is constantly open to us, though to the last hour of our life we have been pious. We are thus placed at the junction of these diverg-

ing roads,—one side presents to us labour, seeking, care, but the end is life and salvation; the other appears easy, tempting, gay, but the end is death and misery. The pains, the trials, the solicitude on the one side are terminated after a brief space, and we awake in an undying glorious eternity; the ease, the pleasures, the gayeties of the other are also soon ended, and we pass away and awaken to misery, to shame, to torment. These are not idle words of a heated fancy, to frighten the timid and unlearned: they are the ideas which are consonant both to reason and Scripture; they are the words of alarm which each man should address to his own soul, whenever temptation threatens to allure him unto the way of sin. Let each then reflect that ages of remorse can be purchased by the sinful enjoyment of an hour: so also can a happy eternity be bought by an hour's triumph over sin; as our wise men teach יש קונה עולמו בשעה אחת "Some one buys his futurity in one hour." Were it indeed that we had no means of resisting the evil, that we were irresistibly dragged along by one uniform course of dire necessity, no such responsibility could with any justice be imposed on us. But there is no fate which controls our actions for bad or for good: we ourselves resolve and act: we are free, and as free agents alone are we held accountable. Children therefore under the control of their parents, men absolutely ignorant, if any such can be found (which is hardly possible), of the requirements of religion, or persons who for the moment act under an unavoidable necessity, are not held responsible for the wrong they do; but remove the necessity; let the children become adults, point out to the ignorant

"what the Lord asks of them," and the full force of obligation is at once established with regard to them no less than to others; they are warned, and their blood will be on their own heads, if they die in their sin.—And every day the spirit of God appeals to us through the pages "of the book which He hath written," to remember that we are dust, accountable to Him for the preservation of the purity of our soul, which we ought to return pure and unspotted as we received her at his hands. For the soul is the highest gift of God to his creatures: she is sent hither to work for her own salvation; she has freedom of will; but above all she is guided by the revelation of her Creator: she is directed to the road which is called righteousness by the evident words of Scripture; and she is petitioned, as it were, by the Spirit of truth, "Choose then life, that thou mayest live." Here then are the duty, means and incentive placed all together before our eyes; and we are traitors to ourselves if we suffer the world and its allurements to withdraw us unto the road of sin, which has nothing, neither reason nor religion to plead for it, and which, when pursued with unvarying success to the very end, terminates abruptly in the death of the body (this all can see), and must conduce to the condemnation of the soul; as she in this manner comes before the heavenly Judge without virtue, without good deeds to plead on her behalf, before a tribunal where no concealment, no evasion will help the too late repentant.

"But why," some one may ask, "are we to follow so many observances which other religions do not impose upon their votaries?". This objection can

weigh nothing, if viewed by the light of reason upon the basis of revelation. Look at our origin. When Egypt was a mighty nation, Jacob came to that land with seventy persons. There we increased speedily into a numerous people, and the land was full of us. Anon the king of that land laid a heavy yoke on us, and we were held in a hopeless bondage for many years. It was then that the glory of the Lord made itself manifest; our chains were broken, and we went forth rejoicing and redeemed, trusting in and upheld by the power of our Father. We are thus emphatically the ransomed of the Lord, his servants whom He brought forth from thraldom, and as such we ought of right to be devoted to his service, willing to follow his guidance, whithersoever He may lead us. We are not able to penetrate his wisdom, to discover how the acts of each of us may ultimately bring about the great change for which all good men look, —one people and one God over all the earth; but this much every child can see, that the Lord must have some great purpose to accomplish for which He has preserved our nation for so many centuries. We ought therefore to rejoice that we have obtained the means to be pleasing unto Him by our conduct, that He vouchsafed to teach us what it is He wishes us to do; and as Israelites we should hasten to sacrifice every thing upon the altar of our faith,—wealth, distinction, pleasure, even life itself, to prove that we are not unworthy individually and collectively of the great salvation which the Lord wrought for us when He released us from bondage. It is for this reason that the law often reminds us of our former abject state, and says among other things:

וזכרת כי עבד היית בארץ מצרים ושמרת ועשית
את החקים האלה : דברים ז׳ טב׳ :

"And thou shalt remember that thou hast been a servant in the land of Egypt; observe therefore and do these statutes." Deut. xvi. 12.

What a glorious destiny! to be redeemed from the bondage of cruel men to be made servants of the Most Merciful! to become from those abjectly degraded the light of the world. Let us therefore value this glorious redemption; let us be Israelites as the law demands, true in poverty, faithful in prosperity, obedient in all things, even in the moments of pleasure; resisting temptation, even if it promise power and distinction. Let then a lot ever so humble be ours, we shall not require any thing more; we shall be upholden by God, as his servants, as his children, and our reward will be sure; for we shall be received by Him, to be shielded and guarded in a life without end, in bliss without measure. Amen.

Nissan 14th. } 5604.
April 3d. }

DISCOURSE XIII.

REVERENCE FOR THE SANCTUARY.

Creator of all spirits! Thine is the earth and all that fills it, and thy glory is above the heavens, and every thing proclaims thy might. Where is the house that can contain Thee? where the temple, fit habitation for thy greatness? But man cannot grasp the vastness of thy being, and he resorts to the walls which enshrine the records of thy will, to pour forth within them the feelings which overpower him, to ask of Thee the aid which his weakness teaches him to expect only at thy Almighty hands. And Thou hast taught us that this service is pleasing to Thee, that contrition of heart is an agreeable savour, which will turn away wrath and annul the evil decree which sin draws down upon her votaries, by the immutable connexion which binds retribution to the chariot of evil. Wilt Thou now hear us, Father of all? wilt Thou now listen, Lord of the universe? Yea, do Thou hear us in thy high abode, where there is the infinity of light, and listen to the prayers which ascend without ceasing from those who know their own sinfulness, and acknowledge Thee as the Pardoner of sin, as the merciful One who delights in righteousness. O do this for thy own sake, in order that our assembling to pray and to hear instruction may redound to our purification, that our hearts may be filled with reverence for thy holiness, to fear Thee,

to adore Thee all the days which Thou hast assigned to us on earth, to testify, unto those who know Thee not, of thy power and goodness, to draw many unto thy footstool as willing servants in thy house for evermore. Amen.

BRETHREN!

As one of the precepts of the divine law we read in Leviticus xix. 30:

את שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני ה׳ :
ויקרא י״ט ל׳ :

"Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord."

We will not discuss to-day the first portion of our text, having had frequent occasions before this to speak of its immense importance to a consistent religious life; but the second part is one upon which our attention has not hitherto been extensively bestowed. Let us therefore examine it in its proper bearing, and elucidate its applicability to ourselves. "And ye shall reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord." By sanctuary is evidently understood the place or places set apart emphatically for the service and adoration of the Most High, and such places as these we are commanded to reverence; because He, to whose honour they are appropriated, is the Everlasting One our God. The great central temple, whither all Israel flocked three times every year to appear in the presence of the Lord, and to which doubtless the first and highest reverence was due, is no longer in the midst of us; we are therefore now precluded from singling

out any one particular spot which could claim an especial sanctity; but the Lord has permitted us to invoke Him in many places, in every town almost of our dispersion, and we have accordingly to take heed that we pay due deference, according to the altered circumstances of the times, to the various sanctuaries which we have been allowed to establish as houses of prayer unto the children of Israel.

When the temple yet stood erect on Mount Moriah, where it towered in beauty, like the waves of the sea gilded by the setting sun, above the houses of the city of our desires, there was a spot which was fenced round by many particular ordinances of sacrifices and purifications, which denoted it as the especial sanctuary, which to enter in profanity or against the institutions of the law was a sin worthy of the severest visitation of Heaven, as we read of Korah in the wilderness, and of King Uzziah at Jerusalem. But even in those days there were no doubt minor sanctuaries, whither the people resorted continually to inquire what God had instituted concerning them, and to offer there the prayers of their heart to the Living All-seeing One; and so Moses taught in the name of his Sender: "In every place, where I will let my name be mentioned, I will come unto thee and bless thee;" understand, not one particular spot only should merit the heavenly blessing, but every other one also, where Israel would be at any time permitted to invoke the Name which angels mention in fear and terror, should be especially blessed with the holy Presence, were the number infinite, and the site the whole earth. "In every place where I will let my name be mentioned, I will come unto thee and bless thee;" as

universal as is the power of God, so universally is his blessing promised here, in Palestine, in Asia, in Europe, in Africa, in America, yea in every place wherever men are gathered in the name of the Lord, there will his spirit come, listen to prayer, judge the petitioners according to their deeds, and grant and do the desires of the devout heart, if the petition redounds to the good of him who asks the grace and of the world at large.

But how shall we reverence the sanctuary? shall we pay respect to the outward walls or inward decorations? shall we entertain any particular feelings of awe for the building which happens to bear the name of synagogue or house of assembly?—In a measure all this should be done; the walls, the decorations, the entire structure have been set apart for a sacred purpose, and they therefore merit that we make no profane use of them. Let us reflect that, though the majesty of Heaven cannot be comprised and contained within any limits which we can imagine, since even the universe, whatever the conception of the mind can reach, and more than thoughts and words can express, cannot confine his being within the vastest extents, it was nevertheless always his pleasure to honour certain spots on earth by the performance of remarkable deeds and prodigies, and to select them in this manner as points whence the good was to issue to the children of the dust who might resort thither to claim his protection. Whenever we build, or rather, to speak more in accordance with the humility which is so becoming to mortals, whenever we are permitted to build a house of prayer, we must assume that we have been favoured by the invisible

instructor whom God has placed by our side to select precisely that spot, which for the time being has merited and thus received the distinction of becoming a place for the dissemination of the truth which dwells in the law of God. If, then, we behold such an edifice, we should feel at once that it is different from the ordinary resorts of man, erected merely for dwellings, for marts of business, or for pleasure; because it is the place especially devoted and marked out as the pivot on which turns the happiness and peace of many, and as such more to be honoured by outward respect than the places not so highly favoured. When we enter therefore the precincts thus hallowed, we should feel that we have left the outward world with its cares and distractions where they properly belong, and we should revert to that great consolatory idea, that now we are in a precinct where dwells the glory, the emanation, if we use so profane a term, of the being of the invisible Divinity, who is pleased to come hither to dwell among us. Only think! the Unending One, who is the Creator of all things, the Lord of all beings, has chosen this and many other places on the surface of this vast earth, which is at last only a minute part of his immense creation, to come in the midst of us mortals, to instruct and to bless us! and we are privileged to resort hither, to stand in this august presence, to speak to Him as though we spoke to a father, to entreat Him as a child entreats a parent, to lay open to Him the secrets of our heart, to pour out into his bosom, again to use a human word, our sorrows, our wants: and He has promised to be here, because here we have been permitted to mention his name, to bless and to

hear us. And should we not feel that in the house of prayer there is a peculiar sanctity? that the walls are holy walls? that the building is more to be prized than our dwellings or our workshops? Assuredly; there, where God is more immediately present, and this we know because He has taught us so in his word, man ought to be more humbled than usually, and feel respect for the floor on which he treads in coming to appear before his Maker, whether this be for prayer or for other purposes connected with the spread of religion, and for such only should the house of God ever be resorted to; since to do otherwise would, as reason teaches already, be in direct contravention to the precept, "And ye shall reverence my sanctuary."

Yet not the mere outward respect for the outward structure is hereby enjoined: the precept goes farther, and will exhibit to us the spirit of decorum which should prevail during our assembling to pray, or while listening to instruction in divine things in the houses erected or devoted to the service of the Lord. —What is prayer? One of our wise men has well defined it as "self-examination, self-judging." We come to speak to our Father in the words of entreaty. But how? Are we to come presumptuously, boldly, without preparation, without thought? are we to ask what we do not need? are we to pray for what we do not deserve? Whenever man therefore comes to pray, especially if it be in a case of need, for something which his own situation calls for, and which is not specified in the forms of prayer which we have received from our fathers: he ought to look within himself before he comes hither; for he appears here

in the presence of God who knows the secret feeling of the heart; and he should carefully investigate whether he is free from the presumption which demands the favour sought for as a right, from that arrogance which claims the good or the aid he needs as more due to him than to any other mortal. How vain would be such prayer! we are in God's house, in his own precinct; and knows He not our frame? our imperfections? our sins? and can we say we deserve his favour? Are not all his gifts unmerited by us? who can say that he is free from guilt? that iniquity stains not the whiteness of the garments of innocence with which his soul was clothed at her entrance into the world?—But let us reverence the sanctuary, let it influence us with the ideas of humility, let us be grateful that we have been permitted to pray here, that we have the grace given us to abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, to inquire in his palace, that our heart may be improved, and our soul filled with the fire of a holy enthusiasm, which is to enkindle in it a desire for better things, a fondness for that virtue which can find its root only in the divine law as revealed to us from Sinai, and which raises man from the dust of the earth to the glory of an immortal life.

How then should we behave in the house of God—where we ought to be, only if our desire is to examine ourselves and to offer a sincere devotion as the proper sacrifice unto our Father? are we to come late after the service has commenced? are we to enter with a presumptuous look, with a confident air, as though it were a house of pleasure which was about to receive us? are we, when here, permitted to gaze

about? to converse with our neighbours, or to laugh at whatever of singularity strikes our view? are we allowed to jump up and quit the place of worship as often as we feel inclined? to leave it before the occasion of the assembly is over? are we to come hither without our prayer-books, unprepared to pray, and careless about what is done here? are we permitted, again, to exhibit ourselves in attitudes unbecoming the sacred precincts? to shout out our responses, without respect to decency or the regulations of the form of worship?—Not this ought to characterize our conduct during our assembling for divine service.—But persons unacquainted with the sacredness which our religion attaches to our religious meeting, entering our places of worship, would imagine that we thought but little of the consideration "before whom we stand," or that our faith did not make it incumbent on us to preserve the marks of outward propriety in our Synagogues. I regret to say it, but it is necessary that I should speak out, boldly without fear or favour; we display but little of that decorum which other religious denominations love so much to exhibit in their churches. Gentiles are punctual to the hour of their assembling; but we drop in at all parts of the service, from the commencement to the ending thereof. Gentiles enter their churches with a demure look, as though overcome by the sacredness of the place: many of us, on the contrary, walk in boldly, noisefully, even if the service has commenced, and they disturb the congregation by their riotous demeanour. Gentiles sit in respectful silence during the entire meeting; but many of us seem to congregate merely to converse and laugh with their

friends.—Gentiles would not leave their churches without the most urgent necessity during worship; but how universally is it witnessed among us that there is a constant running in and out during almost every portion of the service. I will not now recapitulate all the unseemly conduct which is justly chargeable to us; but leave it to yourselves, brethren, to fill up the melancholy catalogue. But I ask you, cannot something be done to check the crying evil?—You will perhaps say, that the gentiles have more incentives to go to church than Jews have; and that is the reason why their meeting-places are filled to overflowing, while our blessed synagogues are comparatively empty. That, for instance, they have a loud-mouthed bell which summons them at the appointed hour to the place of assembly. That they have fine music, elegant singing, delightful sermons, over and above the magnificence of the structures in which they meet:—whilst we are not notified, except by the lapse of time, that the hour of prayer has arrived; while we have no music, indifferent singing, no sermons, or but poor substitutes, and our buildings or meeting-rooms are of mean appearance and contracted dimensions. Is not this the whole amount of excuses for the bad attendance or unworthy behaviour at Synagogue?—Ah, I have forgotten, there is another excuse; we use the Hebrew language in our prayers, whilst other denominations employ the vernacular tongues!—But how ridiculous, how absurd! to make these reasons an apology for irreligion! What ought to bring you hither to pray? is it your own gratification or the duty you owe to God? Do you come hither to judge yourselves, to break your

heart with contrition before the throne of Mercy, or to be amused whilst you sojourn in the courts of the Lord?—Was it thus always among us? and has it come to this that the house of God must be made attractive before you will consent to be seen here?—Yea, a chime of bells is to tell you the hour of prayer has arrived?—But how can you be so tardy to need such a summons! Behold! the sun has risen, joyful to pursue his path until evening; the shades of the dusky night have fled, and all nature stands arrayed in light! Does not this speak loudly to your soul? are you not summoned to bend the knee to the Father who daily renews the work of the creation? And six days you have been strangers in the sacred halls; you have toiled for your support, laboured for your pleasures during all this time, and now you require a stronger incentive than *gratitude* for his goodness, a louder summons than an inward call for righteousness to note the hour of prayer? O shame! degenerate Israel! Shame! on your delinquency! Time was, when the early dawn was watched every morning, for the righteous to forsake his warm couch, and to hasten out in the pelting of the pitiless winter storm and in the roaring of the hurricane, no less than when a beautiful morning invited him to ramble abroad, to repair to the house of his God, there to abide in singleness of heart, till the last words of the minister dismissed the congregation to their homes and their daily toil. Then were no days of ease, of effeminate enjoyment; then were no hours of peace for Israel; no safety in the day, no security in the night; mankind was false to us, the world had drawn the sword against Jacob's sons and daughters; but

we were in those evil times true to our Father; by his sufferance we were smitten with many wounds, trodden under foot by every vile son of the stranger; but hope forsook us not, and we assembled amidst the dangers which pressed down our spirit, to invoke aid from above, to ask for light, for guidance. And now! O degenerate Israel! the world smiles upon you, flatters you, courts your adhesion, calls you the first-born of faith, invites you to seek for foreign alliances,—and now you need to be summoned once a week to bow down before the Lord of life! you let the hour of prayer pass by, because no outward token calls you to your Father's house! you come not at all, or come late, simply because you have too *much ease* and too *little faith*, you pray not, because you feel no sorrow, and you entreat not for forgiveness, because you are blinded by transgression! O woful time of forgetfulness! now we are at peace; but security is not everlasting; who knows but, that unless we repent, the day of danger is near, when sorrows will call us to look up to God, when anguish will ring a peal in our ears to fall down in the dust as penitents and humble sinners!

Farther, to attract us to the Synagogue we envy the gentiles in their possession of music, of song, of eloquent preaching, of fine buildings. But, in the name of righteousness! what is it that we want? I acknowledge that it is highly requisite, and it is in fact honouring the sanctuary, that the service be well regulated, that there should be beauty in holiness, as well as decorum in the outward demeanour of the worshippers. I am as anxious as any one can be that, since we do sing the praises of God in hymns and

psalms, it be done in harmony and propriety, to as great a degree as the case admits of. But beyond this admission I cannot proceed. Within it I do not care how many regulations are introduced, to give effectiveness to the service, to make strangers acknowledge, when they enter here, that they feel themselves as being in a place of worship. But to go farther and to introduce new attractions in the house of prayer, I am entirely unwilling, deeming it a profanation of the reverence due to the sanctuary. Do not let us forget that we resort hither to pray, not to be amused; we enter the synagogue because we are sinful creatures who have to ask the favour and forgiveness of the Lord, but not as visitors who have a right to expect some compensation for the time they spend in attending a place which has no intrinsic attractions for them. Music, the most ravishing even, if it creates a momentary feeling of solemn pleasure, soon fades from the memory, and leaves no religious impression on the mind; it is a sound, and nothing else, and that religion is weak indeed, that faith is sorely defective which must be urged by the voice of the organ, or the sound of a trumpet. Were it that the custom of Israel had sanctioned this as an accompaniment to the worship of the synagogue, we might acquiesce in its retention; but to introduce it against the experience of all past ages, except during the performance of the daily sacrifice at the temple, is placing too high a value upon what is not required in the house of prayer as an expression of a devout feeling. Man is so apt to deceive himself in fancying that he serves God, when he does act merely from a motive to please himself; and I fear, greatly fear, that all the

clamour for attraction and variety in our service is more owing to a want of faith than to the impulse of piety. I am loth to ascribe unworthy motives to any one, especially those who appear zealous in religion, though their zeal be new-born and of but yesterday; still I confess that I look with suspicion, nay, with abhorrence upon the profession of those whose religion consists in talking about synagogues or churches, and how they should and ought to be regulated, whilst otherwise the positive commandments find but little favour in their eyes. Reforms from such as these must be very questionable; and nevertheless it is only such as these who deplore the absence of grandeur from our worship.—It is true, long-standing abuses are not to be continued, simply because they are venerable; but who dares to say that our worship is an abuse of common sense? Irregularities have crept in; but these belong not to the system; leave them out, and the essence nevertheless remains; but if you introduce the gentile worship, the spirit of Judaism flies away, I fear never more to return, unless the mercy of the Lord again revive it by his mighty power. I am no enemy to improvement, but a foe with all my heart to innovations; I love to hear the loud AMEN from the hundreds assembled in the house of God, it tells of faith in the law of Israel, it bespeaks that the hearers feel that the Lord is their God; I love to hear the loud acclaim "The Lord is the God!" when we recite the prayers for the forgiveness of sin, and when the Day of Kippur closes; it proves that the ancient hope beats yet strongly in us as in ancient hearts; it tells that Israel though sinning knows of no God save the eternal Creator; I

love to hear a full chorus of all worshippers joining in the "thrice holy" unto the Lord Zebaoth; I love to listen to the gush of devotion which true believers feel in exclaiming *Adonai Aychad;* it is a testimony borne every day to the undying trust of the generations of Abraham. Now, imagine for a moment that we should reform all this, shut up the mouth of the people, that the choir be not interrupted, introduce the measured chaunt instead of the freedom of prayer in which we now rejoice,—and then answer me where we should find the soul-stirring effects which our ritual is so well calculated to inspire, however neglect and carelessness may at present mar its beauty. A choir singing to a musical accompaniment may be pretty; but it is not a religious feeling which would require it. And whilst the choir is thus singing, the congregation must needs be silent; and little by little the spirit of prayer will be lost in the tumult of the music, whatever may be said of its tendency to raise devotional thoughts, and the prayer-books will remain unopened, at least during public worship; for between the recital of the Hazan and the chaunt of the hired singers, there will be nothing to do for the congregation during their presence in the synagogue. Heaven save us from such a reform, from such a destruction rather; it will be death to us, the moment such a thing becomes general, and we appeal for proof to the few places where it has been introduced, that religiousness upon a Jewish foundation has decreased instead of becoming strengthened, as its advocates alleged beforehand would be the result.

I do not wish to-day to utter all I would gladly express on the subject; I desire merely to give you an

opportunity for thinking on the subject, in connexion with the few hints I have thrown out. No, brethren, we should avoid, as inimical to the sanctuary, to be led away by the pomp and circumstance which attract other persuasions to their churches. I do not wish to be illiberal, but I honestly believe, that the showiness which is witnessed in some establishments owes its origin to the power which this has over the mind of the multitude. People like something to speak of, to look at; and they who preside over various denominations make good use of this fact to allure visitors to their assemblies, well knowing that many will become converts if their fancy be once captivated, and under the full assurance that this same circumstance will attract their own members likewise to remain in their communion. Now, our religion ought to scorn anything so akin to trick, as this all evidently is. It is the emanation of the instruction of divine wisdom acting upon the unbought reason of man; at Sinai the people were instructed, taught, not amused, nor attracted; the terrors of the day were almost calculated to repel the timid and vacillating; but the truth brought the trembling recipients of its behests to stand though awe-stricken, till the whole Decalogue was announced. In accordance with this high principle we have always disdained all artifice in the spread of our faith! there it stands as it proceeded from the hands of God! there is the law as we received it! there is the testimony as it was handed down to us; and here, in this book of prayer, are the ancestral forms which have assisted the pious in their devotion for two thousand years and more. I state this long period; for though some alterations

have been introduced from time to time, still the main portions, independently of the extracts from Scripture which are interwoven in our ritual, have remained essentially the same for more than twenty centuries.—In this same light must we still walk; for the sanctuary so long honoured by the blessing and approbation of God, which has been the resort of so many saints and martyrs, ought not to be violently invaded by men of yesterday, who merely awaken to piety to destroy what has withstood the assaults of centuries.

Equally futile with the want of attractiveness of the service, is the charge of the meanness of our houses of prayer. God needs not a gorgeous temple to be invoked in; He listens to us wherever we assemble to invoke his Name; be this in the gold-covered house of the wise Solomon, or the thatched roof where persecuted exiles meet in fear and terror of the persecutor; be this on the boiling waves of the storm-urged ocean, or the quiet glades of the forest landscape. He is everywhere, and everywhere He is alike Father, God, Saviour. Only bring hearts full of prayerful thoughts, of humility and truth, and it matters not whether your walls be rude or decorated, whether your structure stands firm, or the stars of heaven beam through the crevices of the cabin where you meet. Do not let human pride teach you to regard yourselves more than God's will; if your synagogue be humble, meet in it till the Lord blesses you with means to erect unto his Name a fit habitation; for whenever you can, I speak not merely to you, my immediate hearers, but to our brothers in general, build a synagogue which in externals, too, is an or-

nament to holiness! you would be palpably guilty of ingratitude to let the Law remain under an humble tent, while you dwell yourselves in sumptuous houses. For in this respect, too, proper regard must be had to the limits where humility would degenerate into a forgetfulness of higher duties.—But, let us be prosperous as we may, we ought never to think of decorating the interior of our houses of prayer with pictures and sculptured decorations, which, though so much employed by the gentiles, are foreign to our ideas of propriety and the express letter of the law. Let them retain the advantage of splendour, only let ours be the decoration of holiness which receives the approbation of our God.

It is indeed to be regretted that so little instruction in the synagogue is afforded to the people. Pulpit addresses have something in them to arouse the slumberers on the way of righteousness. But circumstanced as we have been for many hundred years, scattered in small numbers everywhere, it was impossible always to procure men in whom the power of words dwelled. By degrees what was unattainable was considered useless; and now it is difficult, in the revival of a desire for knowledge, to effect at once what has been so long in a state of torpor. Still, I cannot say that much is lost by this absence of frequent preaching: we have the Law; this is eloquent enough, far more so than the puny imitations of later ages. Let Israel study it with diligence and faith; and little need they envy the army of speakers who often pervert the text merely to show their own ingenuity.

But I fear that I have strayed too far; enough has

been shown that we are sadly deficient in outward decorum and inward devotion. It is a sin against the sanctuary, to look for extraneous remedies where the evil is within ourselves. The worship needs no reform, but we ourselves do. Let us make an effort by mutual encouragement, to meet early and all together when the prayers commence; let each person walk into synagogue with his head sunk in a modest manner, with a becoming step, because he enters the house of God; let each person take up his prayer-book devoutly as soon as he assumes his seat; let each person keep his seat without leaving it; let him picture to himself that he is in the presence of his King, whom he is bound to respect and to serve; let each person preserve a strict silence whilst the prayers are offered up, and join devoutly and with propriety where the responses are to be made; let each person endeavour not to shout forth above the congregation to make himself heard on High; let all who love the Lord and seek the peace of Israel meet each other in the assemblies of the faithful whenever the house of prayer is opened; let all likewise acquire a knowledge of the Hebrew, to know what is said, assured that in the language of Israel there is safety for Israel's faith. And as sure as there is a sun in the skies, so surely will outward godliness as well as inward piety increase among us to the edification of all, to the diffusing of righteousness among our children and younger members.—And in this manner only can we fulfil the precept, "And you shall reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord;" meaning, that as He the Lord is everlasting and all-knowing, He will single out for punishment those who enter his courts from pride and

ostentation, who feel no pleasure in being servants of the Supreme, and will bless those who come thither to worship Him in the sincerity and humility of soul, which will open for them the gates of everlasting life in the presence of the God of righteousness, the Creator of earth and heaven.—May He listen to our prayers and bless us with abundant peace. Amen.

Iyar 14th. } 5604.
May 3d. }

DISCOURSE XIV.

THE REVELATION ON HOREB.

Sovereign of the Universe, whose mercy embraces all that has life! we bow before Thee in humble adoration. If we lift our eyes unto the material world, we discover Thee in the works which thy hands have wrought; if we turn our look unto the spirit which dwells within us, we distinguish in it thy creative energy, the Parent of all that exists; and if we raise our view to the wisdom which shines so abundantly from amidst the book which is the direction of our life, we shall have cause for gratitude that it was Thou, O Father! who hast written it for our instruction. Humble and high alike are thy creatures, and the foolish and the wise are alike guided by Thee. How then shall we adore Thee, the Lord of all spirits? How shall fallible man sing thy praises, God of all flesh?—O weak in our strength, fallible in our wisdom,

we can only bow in silence and adore thy power, which redeemed our body from thraldom, thy wisdom, which taught us thy ways with man, and thy superabundant mercy, which has preserved us undestroyed in thy presence. O may it be thy will, this day, and all the days of our existence, to render us truly conscious how much thy might, wisdom, and mercy have wrought for us; that our hearts may not rise in rebellion and pride above thy instruction, but devote themselves forever and aye to be servants in that holy structure of faith and duty, which thy voice erected from the summit of Horeb, when thy thunders, and thy lightnings, and thy clouds of glory subdued the will of the children of Israel, whilst the knowledge of Thee, O Lord of truth! was implanted in the souls of thy adorers. And how abiding has been this holy structure! Centuries have passed since it arose before our eyes; we have at times been obedient, at times rebellious; nations, then unborn, rose up like the grass, and have withered like the flowers of the field; and our race has been scattered, and the outward temple destroyed; yet has it, thy Word, stood firm, unmoved, unshaken, and it still abides with us, to be our teacher, our guide, our testimony. Do Thou, O God! therefore uphold what thy wisdom has made, and teach us thy fear, that we may glorify thy name and bless thy power, forever and ever. Amen.

Brethren!

Malachi, the last of the prophets, at the close of his book, exclaims as the summing up of his prophetic mission:

זכרו תורת משה עבדי אשר צויתי אותו בחרב על כל ישראל חקים ומשפטים : מלאכי ג' כב :

"Remember ye the law of Moses, my servant, to whom I commanded on Horeb, for all Israel, statutes and judgments." Malachi iii. 22.

The seër only adds the promise of the mission of Elijah to restore peace and to announce the redeemer, whose coming will be salvation to those who will repent, and punishment to those who refuse to believe, when the mouth of prophecy was closed unto the world until the restoration of the glory to Zion, and the return of the dominion to whom it pertaineth. We may, therefore, boldly assume, that with the last outpouring of his spirit, which renders man wise unto salvation, the God of Israel, who was from eternity, and will ever abide in glory, again sanctified and confirmed what He had announced on the first Pentecost, the recurrence of which festival we now celebrate, when it was his pleasure to become himself, without the intervention of a messenger, the Teacher and Guide of the people that He had purchased and formed to proclaim his praise.

The call is addressed to all Israel, to every one whose lineage or choice makes him one of those who have a share in the heritage of Jacob; and each one of all these is admonished to remember the law;—because, in the first place, it was commanded by God; secondly, because with the observance thereof are connected the hope of salvation, and the exemption from the curse which attaches itself by the immutable will of God to disobedience.—And this day of Pentecost is well fitted to induce us to dwell upon the

theme, and to refresh our memory with the great doings of the Lord, when He instituted the seed of Abraham a nation before Him, to stand foremost among the families of the earth, as a kingdom of priests and a holy people. It is for this reason that our wise men have instituted the particular portion, embracing the descent on Sinai and the ten commandments, to be read in all our assemblies as the lesson of the day, in order to recall every year, on its anniversary, the great event which contains the seed of all that the Lord will ever do to bring the world under the subjection of the truth, the germ, as it were, of the emancipation of mankind from error, at the time when a new energy will be infused in the sons of Adam, who will have been spared, to seek the Lord and his strength.

Ye sons of Israel, remember the law of Moses! When you enter upon the busy path of life, when you seek your daily bread by the toil of your hands, when the hours of labour follow unceasingly one upon the other, when care is there, and temptation should point out a probable means of enriching yourselves, in contravention of the will of God, at the expense of the rights of others: O, then remember the law of justice, which descended unto you from heaven; lay it as a check upon your spirit, and allow not the tempter to find a response in your heart; but toil on, toil on, amid care, even amid despondency; your God watches you, He beholds your sorrows, and will bless the faithful servants who eschew evil and do good, because they thus deem themselves fulfilling the will of their Maker. And before long the task will be lightened, and you will bless the hour that your religion coun-

selled you to prefer honourable poverty to inglorious ease; and mankind too will accord you the meed of approbation, and be improved by the example of the triumph which you achieved in subduing your evil desires, in subjecting your inclinations to the statutes of the law!

But when prosperity is yours, ye favoured ones of the earth! when you see your substance multiply, your children grow up around your table like olive shoots in a fruitful soil; if ease and health crown your manhood, and everything invites you to pleasure and enjoyment: O then remember the law of Moses, the servant of God. The teacher, too, like yourselves, ye fortunate! was great in worldly things; he was the adopted son of a princess of Egypt; endowed with a mind of a high order, he might, with his courage and address, have stood foremost, had so it pleased him, amidst the throng of honoured menials who surrounded the great Pharaoh's throne. But he disdained the pomp and enjoyment of a courtly life; he saw his brothers enslaved, and he could not resist taking part in their sorrow; in his zeal, an agent of the tyrant fell by his hands, and he fled from his native soil to roam alone in foreign lands.

Again he rose from the lowly state of a shepherd in the desert, and he issued forth the leader of the house of Israel, after their chains of bondage had been broken: and yet he loved not to rest in idleness, though age now counselled repose; he gave himself up to the glorious task of instructing and remodelling, by the divine aid, an entire people, though they were thankless and constantly forgetful of the good things the Lord had wrought for them through the agency

of his servant; and he, therefore, became the means, the instrument of the noblest monument of divine wisdom being imparted to man. He received, as a gift, the commandments from on High, and they are called, after him, "the Law of Moses;" they were given for Israel and for the world, and the son of Amram's name is imperishably interwoven with them in all the lands where the glorious tidings have penetrated. Remember then, in your moments of ease, the law which has descended through Moses; let it admonish you to beware of yielding to the temptation of luxury and sinful enjoyment; peruse its pages, that it may tell you what the Lord asks of you, and abide strictly by his ordinances and judgments. O think not that your opulence or your station can be any excuse for your neglect of our heavenly faith! You, though blessed, belong to Israel! you, though at ease, are amenable to the God who spoke through Moses! Remember your mortality, remember that the Lord is undying; let you escape from visitation a hundred times, retribution is nevertheless nigh if you continue to forget, if you indulge in your desires, unmindful of what has been written in the book of the law. O believe not that your station exempts you from duty! What is your greatness, when you come hither to pray? What is your strength, when you stay at home unwilling to humble yourselves? To-day you are in possession of all you desire, you feel yourselves impelled to quaff the brimming bowl which pleasure presents to your eager lips. But the day wanes, and your glory abideth not; and before the cup is drained, the bitterness of wormwood is mingled with the sparkling wine. And still you refuse to remember, still

you are unwilling to hear! O, blind to your danger, you hurry to your own destruction; for behold the Purifier comes, and his hands hold the touchstone of excellence, and He will sift you out as the chaff from the wheat, and leave you to the contempt and destruction which you have so eagerly courted. O fly while it is yet time, before your day passes away, before the wine is dashed from your lips. O come to the word of God, remember the commandments which were proclaimed from Horeb, and be Israelites, distinguished, if you possess superior gifts, by more meekness, by more charity, by more devotion than those whose necessities leave them no time for extended usefulness. Become you the guides to those who are lost, the props to those who need a stay; and let the book of the law be a witness for you, that you have not lived forgetful of your destiny, unworthy of being considered children of the Most High; and remember that, however exalted may be your lot, you can never surpass in worldly greatness even the saints mentioned in the books of the covenant; and yet they were obedient in all things, friends to man, servants unto God: remember this, and be you too obedient to the law promulgated this day, and be in very truth sons of Israel, children of salvation.

And ye, oppressed brothers! who live under a tyrant's sway, ye become desponding because you are scorned for no crime you have committed, but because you are sons of Israel. You are taunted daily with your faith, you are spurned by the rabble, you are insulted by those who bear rule on earth. You feel tired of life, nothing but anguish by day, nothing but sorrow by night appears to be your lot. And now

the enemies of the Lord rise up against you, to flatter you, to bribe you to forsake what you have so long cherished; they offer you liberty, they offer you ease, they offer you wealth, they offer you high places and preferment, so you will but renounce your religion, and sit down in communion with the sons of the stranger. And you waver; you are weary of the long scene of strife which the world has imposed on you; you hunger after the fleshpots of modern Egypt, and you feel inclined to embrace the murderous hand which deceit and hypocrisy hold out to you.—But O, beware! remember the law of Moses the servant of God! consider what is there recorded, reflect what this must teach you. You envy now the ease of the gentiles who oppress you; so did our forefathers when they worked day after day in the brickyards of Mitzraim's ruler; you envy now the power which is removed from Judah; so did ancient Israel when they were slaves unto Egypt in all manner of work in the field. And what does history teach us on this point? But, that not many days elapsed, when the depth of sorrow was changed into joy, and the tyrant's exaltation turned into sobs and moaning. It is hard to bear the contumely of the world; it is hard to know that we are unjustly spurned from no evil that we have done, only because we bear in our veins blood from a distant lineage, and because our law is one of ancient date. But how dastardly and contemptibly would we act, could we submit to profess opinions which we do not hold, to swear with our lips that we believe as true what our soul loathes, whilst we are uttering the words that sever us outwardly from the community of Israel! How ineffably base must be that wretch

who claims the honour which man can confer, to be exalted to some subordinate employment in the state, to be a legislator where his voice is scarcely heard, at the price of being a traitor to his God! How grovelling must be that spirit who, for the sake of so much money, of so many pieces of silver, declares that he no longer has part in Israel's hope, no share in Israel's law, no portion in Israel's God! And such as these present themselves to our view! they call themselves men! converts to a better faith! But O, let us be wise, let nothing induce us to swerve! What matters it to us, when our race is run, that we have been the humble and the trodden down? Each one of our sighs is remembered by the Ancient of days; each one of our tears is treasured up in his secret abode; each one of our prayers is recorded in his book of memorial; and then instead of shame we will be clothed in glory, instead of tears we will be bound with the pearls of undying lustre which spring from the saving effect which deeds of righteousness cause to grow, for those who love their God, and are true to his word, amidst the years of darkness no less than the hours of gladness.—O all ye oppressed, remember the law of Moses! let the tribulations of the earth draw you closer to Him who can save when man smites, who can protect when the world is ready to destroy. Let it be engraven on your hearts, that from amidst the darkness sprung forth the light which enlightens the world; from amidst slavery came forth the people who became the harbingers of freedom to all mankind, just as from the corruption of the seed springs forth the plant which sustains life, just as from the corruption of the body the soul arises unto immortality.

Why then will ye falter? why will you despair? The same Power which bore rule at the commencement is yet the Governor of all things; the same Eye that looked over all creation and found that it was very good, to this moment overlooks and watches all the deeds of men, those done before the face of the sun, and those wrought in the darkest secresy; and the same Voice which spoke in the thunders of Sinai, and proclaimed unto the assembled nation of Israel "I am the Lord thy God," is not silenced to this day, but speaks through the written Word no less than through the varied book of nature, which is spread open before the eyes of all living. When, therefore, tyrants frown on you, because you believe in one God, and in one only revealed faith, if they threaten you with all the terrors which their malevolence can invent: do not be dismayed, do not forsake the covenant in which you have been reared, but remember the law of Moses which was announced from Horeb; cling to it as you would to a tower of strength, and forsake it not as though it were your very life, the heart's blood which circulates in your veins. With it you are exposed to ills which try your constancy: how much more would you have to endure were you living without its guidance, were you to stay on the earth with the wrath of God impending over you, because you have forsaken the covenant which He made with your fathers.—Remember then, remember! and be true and faithful servants, even as was Moses who was faithful in all the house of the Lord. And ye too, brethren! who mingle with the gentiles as friends, as equals, who have never heard the words of imperious command, who are free to go,

free to come, untrammelled in your industry, unfettered in your opinions,—ye who live under the rule of benign laws,—ye too are sons of Israel, you are a part of the ancient people,—and ye too are bid to remember the law of Moses. Not you feel the bond of slavery, which oppression twineth around your brothers' necks; you know not how humbled the unfortunate is who is daily scorned because that he is a Jew; you, therefore, do not perhaps experience the deep consolation which springs to the brethren in other lands, from the possession of the only treasure which the world cannot deprive them of. Ye mingle, as I said, freely amidst your gentile neighbours, and you see their manners, you observe their customs, and listen to their conversation. However you may feel affected towards them, however kindly you may think of all who bear the human form: you ought to be aware that gentiles, if they are sincere in their religious professions, feel themselves in duty bound to endeavour to make proselytes to their own tenets.—A Jewish maiden, from pure kindness, has stood by the death-bed of her gentile friend; and there the dying girl adjured her by the peace which she felt in parting from this world to seek the same hope in the religion of the stranger. No opportunity is lost, no solemn occasion is pretermitted, to make a strong impression where this is possible. You Israelites, who are weak in your own faith, you among our people who feel not deeply penetrated with the earnestness of religious conviction, and even you who are truly faithful, cannot comprehend the strong hold which the persuasion "that no salvation can be had beyond the limited pale of a particular church" has upon the

votaries of the same. They persuade themselves that it is their business to see that no soul be lost by their omission to admonish; hence they seize every occasion to influence those who come near them, they draw the conversation upon matters of religion, and always finish by hoping that the person appealed to will see the error of his way and—join himself to their creed. I can feel the embarrassment of a timid girl in a circle of Nazarenes, alone of the faith of Israel, adjured by a dying friend to forsake the truth and join the vanities of a stranger's belief; since inexperienced persons are but too apt to imagine that sincerity of profession, especially in the solemn moments of death, is a certain token that the opinions entertained are sure and true. In this matter, then, it is requisite to be strong in resistance, and not to be drawn aside by one consideration or the other. The opinions of a dying person are no more true than those of one in full health; they are merely an evidence that the sufferer was strongly impressed with their importance, probably because he knew no others, and consequently he gives utterance to them in the last moments of consciousness which are left him, as the strongest consolation he can frame in the dread hour of the change from time to eternity. Surely a person dying is not for this reason a prophet, that his words should bear the seal of infallibility. I respect the sincerity of such a person, whose last thoughts confirm the consistency of an entire life; but beyond this they can have no value for any one who is familiar with the workings of the human mind.—But I am wandering too far. All I meant to call your attention to was, that in your intercourse with the world

you are constantly brought in contact with different zealots, who would move heaven and earth to make one proselyte, especially if this person be one of Jacob's sons or daughters. As I said, no opportunity will be omitted to encompass this result, and in season and out of season the shafts of argument or of ridicule will be levelled against our blessed faith, as though it were to be attacked at all hazards. Some one may smile in his strength against these useless efforts, these harmless arrows shot from bows wielded by weak hands. But, brethren, the persons attacked are not always the learned and strong-minded, they are but too often the weak, the inexperienced, children or minors, whose knowledge is insufficient to cope with the dangerous sophistry which our opponents know so well how to employ. To you all, therefore, the prophet speaks: "Remember the law of Moses my servant;" upon all occasions be ready with the law of God in your hearts to offer a strong, a resistless opposition to the appeals which may be made against your peace; arm your children and scholars with the necessary knowledge that they may be enabled to contend likewise for the truth, in order that through them too the law may be remembered.—Let it be impressed on your minds, that the intercourse with the world not rarely blunts the feelings, and removes the great barrier which previous impressions opposed at one time to the approach of new ideas. The example of others is a most powerful incentive to give up our own views of right, especially if we are not very earnest in our own conduct. The persuasion of our friends, persons whom we esteem for the benevolence of their feelings and the goodness of

their hearts, will more or less weigh with the best of us. Reflect on this upon your entrance into the great world, and regulate your conduct accordingly. Let it be your constant aim to oppose a sturdy resistance to any invitation to follow your gentile friends in their amusements, when they are in contradiction to your received instruction. If you are invited, for instance, to be present at a ceremony as a witness in which no Israelite should take part; if you are called upon to partake of food which you are taught to be prohibited; if you are asked to attend on the Sabbath assemblies which are a desecration of the day of rest: let no complaisance on your part induce you to participate, and do not excuse yourselves by saying "It is but a trifle." It is by trifles we begin to tread the road of sin, and we end by great transgressions. Should you find that the zeal of your neighbours leads them to decry your religion, you ought to forbid the recurrence of such a breach of politeness, and if it be repeated, or at once, avoid the person who is guilty of this treason against your faith. A fair discussion is one thing: a bold appeal to do so great a sin as apostacy quite another. If you are skilled in Scriptures, you may freely meet your friendly opponent upon the broad ground which they present to us; but take heed that you resent any direct appeals with becoming firmness. Do not, above all, be ashamed of being Israelites; let the world know, and particularly your proselyting friends, that you are proud of your faith, that you glory in your birthright, that you find the highest consolation in all circumstances of life in the law which Moses received on Horeb. For what have the heathens, Mahome-

dans and Nazarenes to offer which this law does not contain? Let us ask the latter especially, what change has come over the world, that our law should not be true as it was on the day of the descent on Horeb? that should make it inferior to their system, every word of which is borrowed from the superabundant spiritual wealth of ours?—Yes! what have they to offer? The law says "the Lord is one;" no, say they, He is three! The law says "God is no man that He should deceive;" no, say they, He has cast you off, you are no longer his people; as though the Holy One could promise a word and not fulfil it. The law says "Ye shall not make unto you the image of any thing to bow down before it;" no, say they, emblems are permitted to remind us of the unseen glory. The law says "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;" no, say they, the Sabbath is a Jewish ceremony, we will keep in its stead the first day of the week. To be brief, they claim contradictions to the law as a part of religion, and they bid us to place our hope of salvation upon a being of whom the law does not speak, whilst on the contrary it forbids us to worship aught save the great Unseen that spoke on Horeb from amidst the fire. And you gentiles expect to lead us astray by such appeals? can you imagine that the truth of the Lord is so much forgotten that we could doubt of his saving power, his mercy, his unwavering faithfulness? Is it for a plurality in the godhead, which does not exist, that we are to forsake the standard of Israel? Is it for a new law, which was never revealed, that we are to take up a belief in a system which is borrowed from our blessed law? Can we imagine that so unfaithful

were the promises of the Lord, that He could have rejected us from his grace, whereas He so often assured us that He would be our God forever? O surely God is true, and his words are true, and He spoke nothing which is not to endure; He has promised nothing which will not come to pass.

Thus, brethren, you must be always armed; let the world around you be what it may; be you labouring amidst poverty, or revelling in wealth; be you the oppressed for your faith, or the equals of the gentiles around—in every instance remember the law which has been written for your instruction. It has stood unshaken when your own kingdom fell; it has stood triumphant when one by one your oppressors sunk into the gulf of destruction; and by the blessing of God it will stand unshaken, when the tyrants who now tread down Israel will be forgotten, and their thrones have become a prey to aliens. "Remember the law of Moses, my servant," these are the words of Malachi, they are a command, but a prophecy also, and in this sense they mean, that the sons of Israel will ever remember the law, even to the day of the coming of Elijah, who will prepare the way for the Messiah, before cometh the day of the Lord, the great and fearful. How many dangers has the law survived since Malachi spoke! How many millions of its followers have fallen by the sword, the famine, the tooth of wild beasts, the boiling sea, the stake, and the scaffold! How have the sons of Jacob wandered, with no human heart to feel for their sorrows! And still two thousand and more years have elapsed, and the law is untouched, unassailed, nay triumphant over many pestilential errors. Arouse then, Israel! re-

member your God, remember your future glory, your past shame; remember the law under which you have lived so long, for which you have endured so much. Arouse! and show yourselves children of faith, heirs of salvation. Glorify your God by your words and actions, and swear fidelity to that unsurpassed code which your fathers received on this day as the brightest gift of the Lord. Remain firm in the path of duty, and may the blessing of the Lord of heaven and earth be yours, even according to his great mercy which endureth forever, according to the word which He hath spoken through his servants the prophets. Amen.

Sivan 5th. } 5604.
May 23d. }

DISCOURSE XV.

OUR RELIGIOUS TEACHERS.

O EXALTED and holy One who dwellest on high, and art with the humble and contrite of spirit, to revive the heart of those who are bowed down, and to quicken the spirit of the lowly! teach us to feel thy greatness and to be guided by thy wisdom. For well do we know, that when we are prosperous we ascribe the victory to our own hands, forgetful of Him who assists us in our labours. If we are toiling in vain, we imagine ourselves overlooked and neglected by the Bounty which prospers our neighbour's house. And in all cases we are jealous of our equals, envious of

our superiors, as though the success of others could injure our happiness or mar our peace of mind. And still we receive thy blessing! we eat from the table which Thou hast spread so bountifully, so luxuriously for all living; we live from thy beneficence which is scattered over the earth and the sky, over the dry land and the wastes of waters. And as a people too we have often forgotten this, and have fallen off unto the ways of evil, casting thy commands behind our backs. Do therefore aid us through thy all-powerful spirit to accomplish the work which thy revelation has begun, to let us see the wisdom of thy word, that it may render us wise and intelligent, willing to serve Thee, O Father! in whatever sphere Thou assignest to us; mindful of the miracles which Thou wroughtest in the desert, and warned by the punishment which overwhelmed those who rebelled against Thee and thy servant; so that we may be faithful in all things, and always act as Israelites, the servants whom Thou hast chosen to proclaim thy name. Amen.

Brethren!

Our wise men, the Rabbins, who were always anxious to found a strict and consistent morality, no less than a rigid observance of the ceremonies, upon the text of the Bible, have left us in their writings many beautiful moral doctrines which, when observed, will add dignity and worth to our religious character, and tend to render the practice of the divine precepts as honourable in the eyes of the world, as it is meritorious in the sight of the Lord. So much has been said of rabbinical authority, with such a sneer at times have sciolists treated men whose shoestrings

they are not worthy to loosen, that a man who did not know better might suppose, that all they had ever taught was fraught with mischief and folly. This age is one, emphatically speaking, of pulling down. Every day some new-fangled notion is propounded, some singular thought broached and propagated with all the zeal of sectarianism, and with the intolerance with which ultra liberalists always regard those who refuse to admit their theories before they have been proved correct. Let it then not surprise you that so many systematic attacks are made upon the remains of our ancient learning, by persons whose greatest pleasure it is to decry what they do not understand, and to despise everything old, as though every day must bring forth a new system of wisdom and government, as though everything which has come down to us from former years were all conceived in folly and darkness. With all the well-known illiberality of innovators, it is nevertheless remarkable to witness among some Israelites such a haste for innovation, such a rage for destroying. Let them but consider for a moment who were those teachers who guided our people, from Moses to our day, and surely they, the most ultra of them, must feel a profound veneration for men who pursued so unwaveringly, amidst so many disappointments, the duties to which they had devoted themselves. In the days of the Bible there surely was no profit connected with the teaching of the holy word; nay, there was danger from the ungodly, that in their wrath they might strike down those who uttered reproof to them, and testified against their wickedness. During the continuance of the second temple, to how many persecu-

tions were not the scribes and wise men exposed from factious enemies at home, and bloodthirsty invaders from without! And since our glory fell, what have not our teachers had to endure from all who hated Israel, and endeavoured to blot out their name from the page of the world's history! Indeed, we can scarcely designate a single period of long duration, when the study and teaching of God's law brought any worldly ease and tangible gain. No, we must come to the conclusion, that it was a serious pursuit with the great mass of the teachers, that they went forth with the word of instruction upon their lips; it was a solemn conviction that they were benefiting their fellow-men by their labours, which not rarely exposed them to all the hardships of a campaign without the glory of worldly conquest. We should therefore be careful how we listen to those, whose unacquaintance with the circumstances of the times in which some of our books were written, induces them to cast censure upon their writers; and who not alone condemn the authors of what they think ideas unfit for the present age, so boastfully called that of enlightenment, but those likewise whose works and whose sayings are to this day the themes which engage the most learned and refined in their elucidation. I am not the panegyrist of ancient abuses, nor of errors which may among many good things have come down to us; but surely it is no evidence of narrow-mindedness nor of an opposition to improvement, to be unwilling to admit the soundness of new views, till they have something more to recommend them than the mere novelty or the daring with which they are propounded. It admits of no question that so

much good has resulted to our nation from the labours of their great teachers, such as Simon the Just, Hillel, Rabban Gamliel, Jochanan son of Zaccay, Rabbi Judah the chief, Rab, Samuel, Rab Ashi, Saadiah Gaon, Yarchi, Aben Ezra, Maimonides, and a bright galaxy of innumerable others, that no one can be otherwise than safe in following them in the way they have pointed out: whilst on the other hand there is the greatest danger to enlist one's self under the banner of some of our modern guides who, in their mode of instruction, as I have said already, endeavour to unsettle and to pull down everything, and fail to build up and to establish any thing useful instead. There can be no safety in a system which only denies former views, and we ought to avoid it as we would shun an evident sin. There is therefore every reason to mistrust our innovators, who under the pretence of reforming Judaism, have introduced, or endeavour to introduce, ideas and rules of conduct contrary to our received opinions. They are perhaps proud of their attainments in science, which however confer on them no claims to become reformers in religion. They say, perhaps with truth, that the ancients were not deeply learned in worldly matters. But this fact does not weaken the authority of the latter in the light of religious teachers, in which we have always been taught to regard them. It is the misfortune of modern times that their enlightenment has been too sudden; the darkness preceding them had been of such long continuance, that the light which was shed upon them, from so many new and formerly inaccessible sources, has blinded those who were accustomed to the feeble glimmer of the little scientific

knowledge, that came to them from the by-roads of science. Our people had been restricted for centuries to the study of their own books, few knew anything of the "Greek branches of wisdom," and what is more, valued them too little, looking perhaps upon them as inimical to a religious life. How far their fears have been justified, let the bitter example of modern dereliction testify. Jews are not enemies to secular knowledge; but truth compels us to say, that many who have made the arts and sciences their study, have done but little honour to Judaism. Many have through apostacy entered upon public offices, whilst without their dangerous acquirements they would have remained honest, though humble Israelites. Many have studied the sciences, become proficients in the healing art: and their lives, though they yet profess the Jewish religion in name, are but a miserable exponent of the fruits of their learning. These and many others seem to say by their public acts, if not by their private thoughts: "We are now in possession of a talisman unknown to those uninitiated in the mysteries of sciences; we are removed from the bond of obedience, and we revel freely in the liberty of an enlightened conscience." How little there is in all such things to make a sincere Jew fall in love with a pursuit which is so destructive in others, I need not impress upon your minds. And if the few who studied philosophy, so to say, by stealth in the dark ages showed an equal disregard of religion with the modern professors, and doctors, and public functionaries, it is no wonder that the lovers of religion discountenanced such dangerous acquirements.

I know well enough that there is no connexion between irreligion and the sciences; no one need tell me, that the deeper one looks into the book of nature the higher will rise his veneration for God; there is no occasion to assure me, that the Jew must become the more strongly wedded to his faith, when he enters upon the study of history, and discovers how grievously his forefathers suffered for the faith they have handed down to him, and how many persecutions they cheerfully braved only to be permitted to breathe their last breath as Jews, even if this was at the burning stake. I know all this, and so know the blessed teachers who to this day honestly proclaim the law as they have received it. But it is nevertheless true that the sudden change has been to, alas! too many, like the food placed before a famished person, who devours eagerly more than his feeble digestion will bear, and who suffers in consequence excruciating pains, or perhaps death, from his unguarded imprudence. Just so was it with us; the universities were opened again to receive us, and we could learn Latin and Greek, mathematics and history; and we seized with the eagerness of a protracted abstinence upon the long-denied indulgence; but we lost sight of the fact that these things were merely additions to the divine wisdom, and the weak in faith substituted what they learned in the schools for the light of revelation. At first there was a little struggle between ancient ideas and the free notions of the age of change, which commenced with the French Revolution; but one by one fell into the skepticism of the times, till the evil became festering and infectious in its contact. It is but too true, that with partial pro-

fession of religion (we will leave out of sight the downright apostates) many endeavoured to reconcile the freedom of a gentile life with the dictates of our faith. Hence it resulted that, where formerly it was considered requisite, in order to be entitled to the name of a dutiful servant, not to mention that of a pious man, to practise with care every minutia of observance, and to be engaged every day in the study of the Scripture and books treating on religion, it became the new fashion, of even the somewhat religiously inclined, to leave out as much as possible of the routine of duty, to abridge the time of prayer and the amount of devotion hitherto in practice, and to let the reading of secular books supplant the perusal of those of a higher order. Nay, many began to draw their mental nourishment from works written to ridicule religion, and to cast a shadow of doubt upon all that is sacred. Such a course might perhaps have operated injuriously only on the few who fell off from the right path, had the infection continued merely in the minds of those who had no influence on the public; but at length even some of our leaders joined what is commonly termed the modern movement, and they endeavoured to profit by the confusion of the times, in place of manfully withstanding the baleful desire for daring innovations. Now a new system commenced; new words were coined to throw odium on the past; and we were entertained with such terms as "Scientific Development of Judaism," "Mosaism," "Progress," "The Light of the Nineteenth Century," and whatever other terms of the like import were invented or misapplied to the circumstances of the case; until it is no longer possible, for

those who are sincere in their adherence to the law of God, to keep silence amidst the storm of unhallowed feelings which the evil-minded have evoked. Let me state now, once for all, that I too, together with many eminent men, whose humble follower I scarcely deserve to be called, am fully aware of the corruption which had crept in among us during centuries of oppression; I know that a system of superstition was perfected upon the mystical notions of the middle ages, notions which are an excrescence on, not a part of our religion; I know that useless penance, and long abstinence, and frequent fastings, were recommended as meritorious acts. All this is true; and therefore no reasonable person could well have found fault, had the attacks of the modern new-lights been directed only against such matters. But this would not satisfy their towering ambition; three hundred years before, Popery had had its reformers and opponents,—men who, whether from ambition or sincerity it matters not, attacked, and in a partial degree overthrew, in many countries, the political power of the pontiff who claims to this day his authority as the vicegerent of Heaven. And now our modern Jewish leaders would gladly be each a Luther, a Melancthon, a Zwingli, or a Calvin; they must needs contest the tradition of the fathers, as the Nazarene reformers did with the early doctrines of their church. To gain éclat, something had to be done to attract the multitude; and whoever is acquainted with human nature knows, as well as I can tell him, that no one is so likely to be listened to, as he who steps forward as the reformer of abuses, as the man who ostensibly contends against the slavery of opinions. Still our re-

formers forgot one thing. The Roman power was one of political existence; it rested with an iron weight upon the conscience and will of its own followers to no greater degree, than upon those differing from it who had to live in the lands where it had control; in addition to which its missionaries traversed Europe, Asia, and Africa, and began to extend to the continent and islands of America the influence and dogmas of the head of their church. To disobey was at the peril of property, of liberty, and of life; heresy, as it was called, and infidelity, as they viewed it, which included our faith, were mortal crimes, and subjected the offender to the pains and penalties of an inquisitorial tribunal. And when at length the shameless bargain with indulgences was openly exhibited, by which means the church stipulated a remission of sins for a certain sum of money paid to its priests: it was but rational that a change in the minds of the people should take place, and subject the pretensions of the papal authority to infallibility to the test of reason.

Yet where can the lover of change find any thing analogous in our wise men and teachers? Political power they never had; patronage, either great or small, was never in their possession; wealth is foreign to their hands.—What is there then to object to their exercise of a power which is merely founded on the attachment of an oppressed people to a fraternity of leaders, who, amidst all the sufferings they had to endure, were ever found in their midst, encouraging the wavering, comforting the strong, and enduring the same hardship, the same cruel fate, which overwhelmed the meanest among our race? Did not such

conduct deserve all the respect which it received? and did not the people find their devotion to such leaders amply repaid by the instruction they at all times obtained from them in the things which the Lord had ordained? And where does any one find a loftier, a purer morality than breathes throughout the rabbinical writings which have come down to us? You may, perhaps, here and there discover a trace of illiberality, not in keeping with the refinement of our own age; but revert back to the time when these works were composed, when the name of Jew was an incentive to insult, to maltreatment, and to robbery; and then reflect well that the Rabbis were men as we all are: and you will require no apology if the agony of despair wrung, at times, from them expressions of illiberality, to which they never would have assented of their own accord. Nevertheless they taught even in those days lessons of toleration of the highest order, such for instance: "The righteous of the nations of the world have a share in the world to come;" "The Lord withholds not the reward of any creature;" and many of a like import; and these are the men whom modern reformers wish to stigmatize as unwise and illiberal zealots! these the men whom we are called upon to disown as our guides!

And what, after all, do the reformers chiefly aim at? I think the greatest clamour is raised against the mode of worship, as practised in the synagogue, which, it is alleged, is not in consonance with the demands of the times. Granted that there are abuses, and these everybody feels; against these, however, the ancient teachers also exclaimed. The disorder at times observable in our places of worship is in direct

contravention with the dictates of our sages, who teach: "Man should not stand up to pray except with a heavy head," *i. e.* devotional meekness; again, "Know before whom thou standest;"—they denounce as impious the least conversation in the synagogue, especially during certain portions of the service; whilst the law is read in public they prohibit prayers even to be recited, although one should have come too late to the place of worship. What more would you wish to add to these directions? You may amplify, but the substance is there before you; act up to it, and our synagogues will be as well regulated as the most fastidious can desire. All we need is for our people to value what has been handed down to them in this respect, and we may safely affirm, that decorum and devotion will be the ruling traits of our public meetings.—Again, an objection is made to the time of the service, which, according to our tradition, is for the reading of the *Shemang* before the expiration of the third hour of the day, that is, according to the calculation of modern time, *nine* o'clock in the morning. Now this has been found too early for convenience, and every effort is made to postpone the commencement of the service to a more suitable hour. But why should we not hasten to devote the early hours of the Sabbath to worship? is not the whole day holy unto the Lord? is it not his gift that it is sanctified unto his service?—Then it is the length of the service, next the too great uniformity, or the repetitions of the *Amidah* and *Kaddish;* when in truth, the whole time consumed by the prayers on the usual Sabbaths does not occupy more than one hour, or, at most, an hour and a half. True, if we do not feel

earnest in the service, any time is too long; but this is what we need, a feeling of devotion which will carry us to the synagogue and let us spend our time there in full contemplation of the great Being in whose presence we have appeared. The *Amidah* then is a prayer for the things we need collectively and individually; it is a prayer which comprises everything which man can ask of his God; the congregation therefore should first, after assenting to the acknowledgment of the divine kingdom in the *Shemang*, recite it to themselves, that each one for himself and for all may petition the divine Presence to bless him and Israel collectively with all the goodness, which we need at his hands. Then let the representative of the congregation, their appointed minister, pronounce aloud, as one of the people for all, as the representative for his constituents, the same petition for grace, and let each and all assent to every petition or affirmation by the unanimous *Amen* which records, as we said on a former occasion, the concurrence of the assembled brethren in the truths of our religion. Yes, let them in heart and soul listen devoutly to the minister's words, let them comprise the whole of our household in their aspirations; and, when the *Kedushah* is inserted, let them tremblingly sanctify the Lord, who appeared to his prophet in the midst of his heavenly servants, who, like Israel do on earth, sanctify on high his holy Name, with a love, a unison, a fervour to which only the pure souls of the saints can attain. There may, however, be some few repetitions of certain portions of the ritual, which are not of much moment; but surely it is not worth while to commence a violent agitation, simply to remove

these. They are to a certainty perfectly harmless, and, whether repeated or left out, will neither lengthen the service too much, nor abbreviate it materially.—Some also find the reading of the law too long, and wish to leave out the portion from the prophets, which we read on every Sabbath and festival.—Again, I do not see upon what system this is to be effected. According to my view, and every dispassionate person must agree with it, the reading of the entire law once every year is of the utmost moment to all Israelites. Every one is not learned, every one has not the leisure to pursue an even simply biblical study with much profit during the days of labour. To such, as just described, the public proclamation of the law, once during the year, must be of the utmost value; the whole law, it must not be forgotten, is the code which God has prescribed to us; no part thereof has been abrogated, although portions of it are no longer practicable in our present state of dispersion and banishment. Still the precepts, even those not now practicable, are all of interest to us; they are our life, our proof that we are God's chosen children. By all means then, let us not withhold the bread of life from our brethren; let us continue to proclaim it in all their dwellings; it is our constitution, our magna charta, our bill of rights, our declaration of independence; and let it be proclaimed where we are in bondage, where we are members of the sovereign people, that in it we live, in it will we die! O it is a glorious gift, this law of God! it is the wisdom of wisdoms, it is the light of lights! Let Israel bend the head when the book is elevated, let them raise their hearts when its words are read; therein they find the road which

leads on to heaven, there the herb of life which snatches the soul from death! Ay, every year let it be read aloud in all our congregations; let not one of its precious words be omitted, let not a syllable fail to sink deeply into the ear: and we need not a better monitor to guide us aright, not a better incentive to induce us to inquire "what the Lord has taught concerning us."—But what of the *Haphtorah?* is it not an addition to the service, a useless lengthening of our stay in the synagogue? is it not a substitute, introduced during a time of persecution, instead of the weekly portion of the law? Although the latter question is undoubtedly in consonance with the facts, we cannot admit that it is a useless addition to the service, or that we had better shorten our sojourn at the synagogue by so much time as is occupied therewith. Let us see what the prophets were. They were men sent out from amidst the people to teach and to admonish them, in accordance with the word of the law revealed to Moses. They again confirmed what had been given on Sinai, and amplified the instruction by their denunciation of the sins they saw perpetrated around them, and added the consolations which from time to time they were sent to proclaim in the hearing of Israel. In other words, the prophetic writings are a commentary written by inspiration upon the body of laws embraced in the Torah; and whatever is spoken by the seërs of our people, will find its echo in the books of Moses. Why then should we not read the portions which so clearly correspond with the law from the books of the prophets? do they not tend to confirm in the souls of the worshippers the faith in the truth and uprightness of their

adored Father? Who can read unmoved the address of Moses to the people, just before his death, in connexion with the terrible introduction to the book of Isaiah, in which he sketches the backsliding of his contemporaries, which he could not prevent, against which he denounced the coming doom? Needs it that I multiply instances to prove what does not in truth require proof? No! I will leave the subject to your own reflection, confident that you yourselves can find parallels enough to finish the argument without my aid.

But let us return to our sages and their opponents. The Rabbis have, in accordance with the right inherent in the teachers selected by the people, from time to time introduced ordinances, as fences to the law, that men might not inadvertently break the vital commandments. They proceeded upon this principle, that there can be no injury in omitting to enjoy the things permitted, if by this means we guard ourselves against sin. Strictly speaking, nothing has been added to the law, they only defined the extent of the precepts, both the affirmative and negative kinds. There can be no doubt of the existence of a *tradition, or a received manner of observing the precepts which the law contains.* That all the sayings of the expounders of the law are absolutely traditional I will not maintain, nor is this the opinion of our teachers. But whether the ordinances are traditional or instituted for safety's sake, they have become so intimately interwoven with the life of our nation, that they cannot be disrupted without giving a severe and useless shock to our national existence. One thing is evident, that the system of the Talmud is one of great uniformity,

or rather I should say, it *was* one of great uniformity. Whatever occurred in the domestic or social life of our people, was strictly adjudged by our chiefs to the best of their capacity and understanding of the case, according to the decisions of the wise men. There could be no thought of sectarianism, while the means of arriving at a satisfactory solution were always at hand. Local customs were always permitted; the freedom of establishing congregations on such principles of government as pleased the majority in each was never contested, so long as the usual officers, a civil president, treasurer, and directors, on the one, and the Rabbi, reader, teacher, and the subordinate officers, on the other side, were chosen. So also the form of prayer, or *Minhag*, was not interfered with, provided, as before, the main principles of the worship, which are alike in all, were adhered to. Thus it was for many centuries, and there was therefore a perfect unity in the church of Israel, with the exception of a small body of literalists, or Karaïtes, who nevertheless have a mode of interpretation, necessarily traditional, though doubtless it deviates from ours. And thus it might have always continued, had not, within late years, a number of ignorant fanatics in the first instance endeavoured to establish a mode of life of an ascetic and extravagant nature, and to introduce the same in their worship,—and in the next an equally unwise class sprung up who will judge every thing according to philosophical rules. The former are known as the Hassidim or Zoharites, the second as the Reformers. There can be no doubt, but that the ascetics will not long continue in their extravagant manner, but will gradually return to the

bosom of our community to which they belong. But the second class, or the Reformers, seem to disdain any thing except their own views; they have drunk of wisdom, still the stream is polluted by the worldliness which they have imbibed under their gentile masters and teachers; they come to cut down, and to level the obstructions which a life of enjoyment finds in our law and the teaching of our instructors. Some of them are every where, though not formidable in their numbers as yet, secretly working to sap the foundations of our system. I know well enough, that they allege that they mean to restore, to fortify; but their words are contradicted by their acts; they may perhaps be honest, but wherever they have appeared up to this moment, the course of religion has been backward, if we take the biblical observances as a criterion. Instances could be produced; but in a public lecture it is not fit to mention persons and places, even should my sense of propriety not check me from so doing. Still, from what I have seen in print, I cannot hesitate saying, that so is the case, that wherever the reform mania has penetrated, there also is the spirit of religiousness greatly weakened. Yet spite of themselves the Reformers have rendered a great service to our blessed cause. In former years our learned men were content to write for the learned; because they knew that these felt a desire for instruction in the things pertaining to the law. But in the course of time many were left uninformed, a fatal error undoubtedly. Now the agitators have awakened inquiry, and the means of information have become greatly increased. The torpor so long resting upon our masses is vanishing, and "to-morrow the Lord

will make known who is his, and who is holy him will He bring near to himself." Yes, the Lord who assisted Moses in his arduous mission of liberating the souls of his brethren from the degradation of slavery, will yet watch, is still watching over us with paternal care. The cup of disunion is bitter indeed, bitter the dregs which it presents to our lips. But what was Moses's situation when he was unjustly assailed with the words:

כי כל העדה כלם קדשים ובתוכם ה׳ ומדוע
תתנשאו על קהל ה׳ : במדבר טז׳ ג׳ :

"For the whole congregation, are all of them holy, and in their midst is the Lord; and why then will you raise yourselves above the assembly of the Lord?" Numbers xvi. 3.

Fearful indeed was the assault which threatened, from the preëminence of the malcontents, to overwhelm all which had been built so recently with so much labour and wisdom. Ay, the same thing takes place again in our day. Men of wisdom assail the righteous, they revile them for having assumed an undue authority over the congregation of Israel; and like Korah, their object is not the welfare of the people, but the destruction of the divinely-appointed leaders. But as the Lord saved his servant from that severest of all trials, so let us hope that his spirit will again guide us to overcome the difficulties which now beset our way. Disunion has been threatened; but let us go on firmly, piously, in the task of scattering information and knowledge among those who need instruction; and the indifference and the love for

change, which now are witnessed, will yield before the power of the word of God; and the triumph of righteousness will again be witnessed now, as on the day when the righteous Moses was vindicated as the faithful servant of God by the display of miracles, when all the people felt, that the Lord was their God, and his word true, and that his messenger was true.

May the light of the Lord be our guide, and his blessing our shield, now and for ever. Amen.

Tamuz 4th. } 5604.
June 21st. }

DISCOURSE XVI.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION.

God of Israel, the great and holy King! we humbly approach thy goodness because of our sinful state and obduracy. In whatever country we have dwelt, we have rebelled against thy law, and have pursued the evil inclinations of our heart; and though warned of the death of the soul we were incurring, we heeded not the danger, trusting in our own wisdom, presumptuous in our own strength. And, therefore, though our sins have banished us twice from our lovely heritage, because we had been disobedient to thy law, though we have felt the weight of punishment which always follows in the wake of transgression, we have not repented of our iniquity, but add to this day transgression upon transgression, and load

our soul with the weight of sin which cries aloud for vengeance from thy august and impartial tribunal.—O do now hear us! and let thy law be rendered clear to our understanding, convincing to our reason; that we may hasten to become obedient to its dictates, and willing servants in the midst of those who adore Thee. Do also subdue the arrogance of human pride in our hearts; that we may be humble, and anxious to acquire of those who are able to instruct a knowledge of what it has been thy pleasure to reveal to thy creatures. That we may be purified from iniquity, and call down upon ourselves all the blessings which are written in thy book, and thus hasten the advent of thy anointed one, in whose days there shall be peace on earth, when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and when men shall no more learn war; when all shall speak holiness in thy temple, and the sons of men shall breathe charity and good-will towards all, and one shall lead the other to righteousness and to worship sincerely and truly in thy house, where Thou wilt be alone adored, Thou who art the only God, the Father of peace, the everblessed Creator. Amen.

Brethren!

If we survey the gifts which we have received from the hands of Almighty Power, we must come to the conclusion that, however precious may be the blessings of life, health, and those things which administer to our bodily wants, the light which guides the spirit to a knowledge of what is best suited to the satisfaction of the inward mind, is by far the most precious gift of all. Life has been imparted to inferior ani-

mals as well as to ourselves, they have, in many instances, strength and activity, even if the bulk of their body is smaller than ours, far exceeding any thing we can lay claim to, and to all appearance they have more joys, less apprehensions, and far greater freedom from care than fall to our lot. Things, on the other side, which merely administer to our body, are not always possessed by those who have done the most to obtain them, nor is their possession of that kind which can with any degree of truth be called security; for nothing is more established by historical facts and the experience of each individual, than that every thing which we call our own is scarcely placed within our reach, before we deplore its having escaped from our hands. For whatever human hands have acquired, whatever human hands have built, is perishable in its nature, decaying from its own organization; and, as soon as it is produced, it nourishes the seeds of decay and death. Speak of wealth, yea of hoards of all on which the eye feasts, and which gratify the feelings of avarice: and what is it? Barely has one lived to amass it, before his course is cut short, and he leaves to others what he scarcely had time to call his own. And then there are losses and disappointments; arrangements of business frustrated; hard earnings snatched from the lawful possessor; the accumulated inheritance of ages carried off by the slow process of impoverishment, or scattered to the winds by dissipation or revolutions in commerce and governments: and then let any one dare to say, that the blessing of wealth is one on which man can rely during his earthly pilgrimage. —We will not speak of the mere animal enjoyments,

of pleasure, and of ease; for they decay whilst you are using them,—in fact, each moment of delight, which has not an abiding-place in the spirit of truth and divine love, is so much useful time taken from the space allotted to us on earth.—And say what you will of power, of the delight of ruling over others: and what is thereby actually gained for the permanency of that for which we are striving, for which we naturally long? who is there with the true feeling of honour, but would gladly see that something should be left of his labours, that his existence should not pass away like an idle dream? and who is there who thus feels, but must be convinced that earthly power, which merely looks to consolidate itself, cannot produce the fruits which are to survive him, and mark his life as one which has not been in vain? They who have striven the most for earthly greatness, who have shed the most blood, fought the most battles, conquered the most nations, destroyed the most cities, and received the most homage from their subjects, have all by such acts not added any permanence to their deeds; for their fabrics have vanished, as vanished before them those fabrics which had been built by their predecessors.—Speak of human wisdom, that wisdom I mean which endeavours only to acquire mere knowledge however extended: and what does it ultimately avail? Let one have written ever so many books, they will be soon forgotten by the world, however a few may value their contents; and many a one who lived admired by his contemporaries, or whose praises were sounded by a more grateful posterity, now lives, perhaps, only in the catalogue of some library, or is altogether forgotten. Let one

have made ever so many discoveries, and what will be the result? others filch from him his just reputation, or if he is left in the possession of his rights, other and newer productions will supersede what he has so wisely and painfully elaborated.—And there is liberty, that brilliant treasure of which poets have sung in all ages, which has roused the patriot's soul, and of which the orator's lips overflow with the magic of eloquence! O she is indeed a treasure, one for which fallen man may justly sigh, for which he may breathe forth his holiest aspirations. But alas! she too will not abide securely among mankind; she too is a blessing that escapes from our aching sight unto other realms,—realms in which sinful man has not his battle-ground, and where he has not room for the exercise of his baleful passions. Every now and then we fancy that we have secured for her a dwelling-place amongst us; but speedily we discover that the intolerance of party, or the pride of sectarianism will not allow others to enjoy the same rights which they claim for themselves, as though fearing that their liberty will be circumscribed by the freedom which is enjoyed by others. And how speedily are the passions inflamed! how readily does the bloodthirsty demagogue mislead the people to grasp the arms of destruction! how is peace spurned, because the laws impose a wholesome restraint upon unbridled license! and lo! the tocsin sounds in peaceful village, in tranquil city, and the citizen sheds the citizen's blood, and the sky is lurid with the flames of burning houses, and the devouring element seizes upon the rafters of the halls of science and the fanes where men assemble for worship; and a deadly hatred is

implanted in the hearts of now contending, once loving brothers, and fled are the unity of the domestic hearth, and the harmony of the social fireside: all—all—because man loves not his neighbour like himself;—all because the selfishness of human pride leads each to seek dominion over his fellows;—all because God's law is not known, because God's name is not feared. Needs it for more proof to exhibit to your understanding that all mere earthly gifts, the highest, the best even, cannot be enjoyed without the certainty of their ultimate destruction? without the harrowing consciousness that they afford a mere temporary respite from the ills which beset us on all sides during our earthly, toilsome, and tearful career? —And were it now that, with all these benefits, the mercy of God had been exhausted, nothing would have been bestowed on us which is worth living for, and in despair we might sit down and exclaim in the bitterness of our heart, "Man is born but for trouble." And indeed is there a multitude of troubles which are the lot of every child of earth; from the moment that he opens his eyes to the world, from the moment that his mother hails his birth, until the grave closes the scene over his body, and weeping friends bid him a "Go in peace," sorrow chases sorrow, tear follows on tear, and disappointment succeeds disappointment till the heart sickens within the anguished bosom, and the soul would fain fly away to a purer world, where she may rest free from the attacks of the ungodly, and repose in quiet from the tumults and cares of this life, which end not with the night, and are renewed again with every morning.

But no! there is in this existence even a purer, a

more permanent good than merely earthly things, a blessing which unites mundane life with eternity, the perishable with the immortal, the creature with his Creator. This is the guide of the soul, the monitor that speaks to the inward mind,—it is the spirit of our religion. It needs no human tongue to proclaim aloud that the Lord is wise, that his knowledge is boundless, and his eye all-pervading. Yes, go and doubt, presumptuous man! go and deny thy Maker's wisdom; but soon the skies will tell thee that their Author is great in thought, perfect in knowledge. The sea will echo the theme and shout forth aloud the intellect of Him, who poured out its heaving billows from the hollow of his hand, and built up its storehouses in the vasty depths, which thou canst not fathom, with the unmatched skill of omnipotent architecture, where the coral is entwined with the pearl, and living fires are flooded by unceasing fountains, where the monsters of the deep pursue their sportful gambols, and where sleep thousands of undaunted hearts whose courage was quenched by death only, and where is piled up the precious gold dust of the Eastern Ophir, and the gems from the Western Brazil. And the earth too will show forth the greatness of that all-searching Wisdom, that shadowed forth the many plants that cover its bosom, and the infinite variety of animated things, that all live in their own proper sphere, and all fulfil the mission for which their nature best fitteth them. No!—no man who has ever thought, who has ever felt, who has ever reflected, who has enjoyed, who has suffered, can do otherwise than believe that the Creator is wise beyond our most exalted conceptions of intellect;

and that it is from Him we derive as a gracious gift whatever of knowledge has been bestowed on us, whose days are no more limited by the period set unto them, than our wisdom is circumscribed by the bounds which our weakness permits us to reach. It is therefore because of the insufficiency of our own reason, that we have received an additional means of knowledge as a directing guide, which is to supply from a superior Source those links in our knowledge, which our own power of discovery forbids us to acquire by ourselves. The light which sheds its rays on the outward world is from the Lord, and so are the illuminations which are vouchsafed to the inner man. Not a thought arises, not an idea is evolved but it is a gift of Heaven, and all we think can be directed to a good and happy consummation, if we will let the direction which we have received guide us in the path which the Lord has marked out for us. And let our wealth then take wings and fly away; let no earthly pleasure gratify us by day, nor joy refresh us by night; let our power be broken, and our wishes remain unattained; let learning elude our research, and freedom even be denied to us; let all the accumulated ills overtake us in our pilgrimage: we shall still have that consolation that we are travelling onward unto that land of blessedness for which we thirst even in the moments of the abundance of life's refreshing stream, that we are approaching that rest for which the heart sighs even in the hour of its greatest triumph. Yes, the knowledge of religion is that gift of God, which more than all other possessions heals the wounds with which we are struck during our wandering, which teaches the humble

how to become great in the realms of eternity; which advises the poor of a state in which indigence is not felt; which instructs the captive, that there is a world where no chains fetter the limbs, where no bolts and massive doors shut out the light of heaven; which whispers to the mourner, that there is a state where no grief oppresses the heart, where no tears bedew the cheek; which assures the inquirer after truth, that there is a condition where all the mysteries will be solved, where the desire for holy knowledge will not remain ungratified,—a world of light, where all the perfections which in vain we look for here will find their place, where the longings of the truly wise will be fulfilled, where no taskmaster is to be feared, where the wicked can exercise no terrific tyranny over the lowly and humble.

Is this not the essence of religious knowledge? is this not the spirit which breathes throughout our faith? And we say it without boasting, without sectarian bigotry, if there is any religion which elevates the soul in the midst of sufferings, which admonishes the rising pride in the hour of prosperity, which teaches resignation, enforces humility, demands devotion, and exacts obedience, that religion is the faith of Israel. It is pure in its source, the Creator himself proclaimed it; it is immutable, the Supreme Wisdom ordained it; it is triumphant even in its earthly degradation, because the Lord of life supports it with his mighty arm. Why then are we unconscious of the great blessing? why are we careless about the treasure which is ours? Should a man present me with a string of jewels, and bid me watch over it because of its value, that he would reward

me when I return it safely into his hands after a given time, but that he would punish me should I destroy or lose the same: would I not, in case I were certain that I could not escape his power, endeavour to comply with his injunction, and guard carefully the string of jewels, so that my master, when he comes to look after his gift or loan, may find it safe and uninjured in my possession? Both common sense and interest would teach me that this is the safest course, nay the only method by which I may bring reward on myself and avoid the certain evil. How much more then ought we Israelites to guard those priceless jewels which the law of God contains, which have been surrendered to our keeping, which we cannot neglect or allow to be injured without incurring the visitation of our heavenly Master! If a man be ever so powerful we may hope to disengage ourselves from his grasp by a successful rebellion, by a lucky escape, by a cunning device or bribery, by a well-contrived deception. But how can we escape from our God? no rebellion, no apostacy, no joining foreign standards absolves us from our allegiance; we are his subjects, no matter how we may deport ourselves. We cannot by flight place ourselves beyond his reach; for wherever we are, we sojourn in his dominions, wherever we place ourselves, even by rushing into the arms of death, we are under his cognizance, in his reach, in his power; in the walks of life there is his spirit, and at the portals of death there too we shall meet his presence. What bribe shall we offer that we could appease Him? is not all on earth his own? are we not too his subjects? his property? his creatures? And how shall we be able to deceive Him—

Him the all-seeing God, the Omnipresent whose eye surveys the darkness of the prison-house and sees the secrets of every heart? No, we cannot escape his power, his hand is sure to reach us when we sin; and his beneficence is equally extensive, to grant to us that recompense which our humble acts may merit in his just tribunal. What inducements are therefore presented to us to be true and faithful! To other nations religion is a bond of divine love which unites only the individuals in a sectarian confederacy; for though it should purify the hearts, they need not a national religion to unite them into a national fraternity. But with the Israelites the case is very different; there is among us no adhesion of nationality if it be not by our faith; wherever we live we are bound to pay allegiance to civil laws to which our voice never assented; we give this obedience cheerfully; it is our duty to obey the laws of the state where we are domiciled, whether we are equals with the other inhabitants or not. Nevertheless we may boldly say, that we have a higher duty than contenting ourselves with merely forming a minute portion of different states; we have a law which, when duly observed, will mark us as members of a great family, the portions of which are scattered abroad in every land, yet one and the same through identity of hope, and identity of descent. If we merely look to our temporal interests, to those things which we have described as fleeting and unsubstantial, it will certainly be of no moment whether we remain Jews or not. But since it would be folly to live for unsubstantialities only, since without the wisdom of God there can be nothing stable and sure: it is requisite, from reasonable grounds even, that we

seek to obtain this wisdom and display it in our conduct. If now we believe in the truth of God, if we maintain that He is without falsehood and change: we must likewise admit that his words are permanent, and that what He has ordained must stand forever. It is this which constitutes the Jews a nation though scattered everywhere; this belief binds them, not as individuals of a sect which can admit of certain changes in their fundamental ideas with the changes of the times, but as a well-organized state, the constitution of which is immutable, and protects alike all who claim affinity with the state. In short, to be Jews, we must observe the Jewish religion: it is a monstrosity to say "I am a Jew although I have forsaken the law." It cannot be; the observance of the law is the essence of Judaism; and if even we do assert that an apostate cannot place himself beyond the pale of his religion, since with all his sinning he is bound by the law: still his descendants must lose all portion in Jacob's house, whilst they do not pay allegiance to the Law of Moses.

But is it an unjust burden which this religion imposes? O no! It is true, it makes it incumbent upon all of us to be distinguished in our life by certain outward acts, and to bear testimony to certain doctrines which are the basis of our belief. Still it is no unjust burden. Let us not forget, that we are not to live for outward things merely, that there is a spirit too which demands attention; and that, therefore, unless our religion be false, unfounded in fact, it is simply the part of ordinary prudence to remain faithful to its behests. To the true Israelites the Bible duties are not burdensome; they love to show that they can

obey the Lord even at the risk of worldly inconvenience; they can gladly dispense with treasures which can be purchased by sin only, and they joyfully bear testimony to the glorious truths of the laws which have never proceeded from human intellect, which have for their Author the Lord of the spirits of all flesh.

And nevertheless Israelites have been faithless! Israelites have started back from the righteous path! Israelites have joined themselves to the gentiles! Israelites have worshipped strange gods! Unfaithfulness has justly been laid to our charge, and we stand abashed in the sight of our God, because of our iniquity. How merciful He has been to our backsliding, how forgiving to our nation, how indulgent to the individuals, let our history tell, let the experience of each one of us proclaim. Often as we have incensed Him, often as we have vexed his holy spirit, we always met with indulgence, and the wrath was not wholly poured out, and we were not consumed. And yet, neither this indulgence, nor the terrible rod of judgment has converted our hearts, and we are obdurate to this day, transgressors as were our fathers. And what did our fathers profit by their rebellion? Disunion, dismemberment, scorn and sorrows. And says the prophet:

שמעו דבר ה׳ בית יעקב וכל משפחות בית ישראל׃
כה אמר ה׳ מה מצאו אבותיכם בי עול כי רחקו
מעלי וילכו אחרי ההבל ויהבלו׃ ירמ׳ ב׳ ד׳ ה׳׃

"Hear the word of the Lord, O house of Jacob! and all ye families of the house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord, What wrong

have your fathers found in me, that they went far from me, and walked after vanity and have become vain." Jere. ii. 3, 4.

Yes! what evil, what wrongdoing did our fathers discover in the Lord, what iniquity did we see in Him, that they did forsake his covenant, and that we now are so anxious to brave his wrath. What has He not wrought for us! how many mercies have come to our share! how much wisdom has been imparted to our souls! and still we loved the forms of gentile worship and embraced them in olden times, and now we cast off all restraint, simply to be free from the burden of Judaism. What did our fathers gain by their apostacy? Let history tell us her sad experience—whatever a country holds dear, whatever is the boast of a happy people, fell prostrate under the heavy tread of our enemies' countless legions; nothing was spared, the sage in his study, the hoary-head in the midst of his young descendants, the bride by the side of her lover, the mother who in affright threw her powerless arms round her helpless child, together with the man of war and the priest at the altar, all fell before the destructive sword; the gallant men of Israel had to bend their neck under the galling yoke of captivity, and their free limbs received the chains of servitude. And what shall we gain by our backsliding? I fear the future! The past is full of instruction. Israel never yet sinned without the Avenger's rod falling heavily on their limbs. And will the wrath be now withheld? or is the past to teach us that it is time we turn our attention to the way we have travelled, and to fall back upon the mercy of the Lord which is ready to receive us? O, let us consider that there is

no injustice in our God, that He has given us in his own glory the law which we ought to obey, and that therefore we shall be held accountable, if we forsake his service. He is good and merciful; and He led our fathers from Egypt, supported them for forty years in a trackless desert; it was his miraculous power that upheld and protected them. And will He not do the same for us, if we only confide in Him? is He not the same God? and are we not the same people? He is beneficent as ever He was, and we transgress now as we formerly transgressed. Still as then, there are always among us those who will abide obedient to the standard of our law, who will not swerve, though the multitude should prove unfaithful; and on them, should all else fail, will devolve the hope of our regeneration, the spreading in a later period of the glory of God. Our fathers sinned, still their religion survived; under every green tree their idolatry defiled the land, still the revelation of Sinai did not perish amidst the rank weeds of unbelief which overwhelmed our own Palestine. So will it be now; let those who are tired of the law go where their vile passions lead them; Israel can live without such defenders; let them fall off and join other creeds, the law of God can flourish without such supporters. Still, members of the house of Israel! it is not well that indifference should be the besetting sin of any one of us; the law is alike given to us all; let all then resolve to adhere closely to the covenant of God, under this conviction, that though the religion of Israel is in no danger from the apostacy of its born adherents, it is not safe for these to forsake the law which claims their obedience. The Lord is still our God as

he was of old in the wilderness and Palestine, and He asks of us to this day, "What evil we have discovered in Him that we should forsake his law?" He is the same, able to punish as He was of old, and as willing to pardon, if we repent, as willing to reward, if we are obedient. Shall the Spirit always call on us in vain? are our ears always to be averted? Let us reflect that for us there is but one source of wisdom, for us there is but one way of salvation, for us there is but one solace in the hour of affliction. Let us then, beloved brothers and sisters, seize on this hope, this way of salvation, this true wisdom; let us cleave to the Lord who has afflicted us; let us take it to heart, that twice was our temple destroyed for our iniquity, that thousands of the faithful fell for the sinning of the multitude; that year after year we commemorate the days on which these mournful events darkened the sun of our national prosperity: and then let us consider how unsatisfactory every thing in life is without we consecrate ourselves to the Author of our existence. Surely that heart must be obdurate that will not thus feel, lost that soul that refuses to be humbled. O let us arise! it is time to worship, it is time to labour for Israel, for Israel's God; and if we strive honestly, the work will progress speedily, happily; and who knows but the Lord may have mercy on Zion, and convert our mourning into joy, break the fetters of our oppressed brothers, and humble their tyrants who now tread them in the dust. Let us at all events deserve to be happy, and let us leave to God the issue; let us submit cheerfully if He is pleased yet longer to afflict us, conscious that He only wounds for a time that our cure may be permanent, and our

health undying. May He then in mercy hear our prayers, and return to Zion in everlasting glory. Amen.

Tamuz 25th. } 5604.
July 12th. }

DISCOURSE XVII.

THE DESTINY OF ISRAEL.*

O Lord Supreme, who art the Fountain of all grace and goodness! look down, we beseech Thee, upon thy servants the house of Israel, in all the places of their dispersion, to bless them with the abundance of grace and peace from before thy holy throne. Strengthen them in their pilgrimage, that they may walk uprightly in thy presence, and guard their steps that they may not hurry away into the path of sin, where man meets thy indignation. But above all, we pray Thee to teach us to feel our insignificance and unworthiness, that we may be able to subdue the pride and arrogance which cling to human nature, which counsel us to value ourselves above those who like us are thy children, like whom we are servants in thy holy house. Yea, inspire us with that meekness which is the best ornament of thy adorers, which sees in Thee one universal Father, in every man a neighbor, in every Israelite a brother; so that, united heart and hand, we may hasten to promote the spread

* Written and spoken during a brief visit to Montreal, Canada.

of thy kingdom, and lead sinners to fall down before the footstool of thy glory; and in this shall we know that Thou art our God, and that indeed we have found grace in thy eyes. Do this for thy sake, for we have no merit to deserve this blessing; do this for the sake of thy holy name which is profaned among the nations; and do this also for the sake of the covenant which Thou madest with thy adorers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who walked before Thee in the days of old, whose seed Thou hast promised to bless, and whom Thou hast redeemed to be unto Thee a peculiar treasure, to proclaim Thy glory unto the ends of the earth. Amen.

Brethren!

A glorious lot is ours, a blessed task has been imposed on us. Ever since our forefather wandered forth from Ur of the Chaldeans even unto this day, we have stood the representatives of high principles, the defenders of truths, everlasting as the Source from which they sprung. Ask of history what have been the Jews? And you will not be referred to magnificent temples, nor to beautiful works of art, nor to scientific discoveries as the evidence of our existence, but to the code of laws which we have received from the Almighty himself through the hand of his servant Moses. There indeed have been nations more numerous and more powerful than we, nations whose architecture, whose wisdom, whose refinement, whose arts are the themes of wonder for all the world of this present day. But they all *have* been, to speak emphatically, they have been, and now they have passed away from among the families of mankind, and the plough-

share of destruction has passed over their lands, the wand of oblivion, over their mighty achievements. But Israel? they have indeed endured hardships at which the heart recoils when calling them to mind, sorrows have fallen to their portion which harrow up the soul when one recounts them; but with all this we exist, no one can say we merely have been; no, we are, here, there, in every land where freedom and toleration reign, and here, there, and wherever enlightenment has passed over the soil, we are present to proclaim aloud, that we are the servants of *one* God, followers of one law, a law which came from the Lord, which is the brightest chain which entwines in one holy union the creature that obtains life and asks favours from the highest Source, with the Source whence all, that is, has sprung into being.

It is a principle which marks our life, it is a principle which we must uphold; hence we place not our fame upon perishable things, though these be the adamantine rocks of Egypt's pyramids, or the marble statuary which graced the temples of Rome and Hellas, which adorned the mighty structures of a primeval world, and which excites the emulation of after-ages; but we hold up the inspiration which has been intrusted to our charge, a gift which is ours, and which is inseparably connected with our name.—Darkness rested on the face of the mind, as did chaos at the beginning upon the face of the waters, and nations walked in the ignorance of their soul after vanities which are the works of their hands, and called upon gods which are powerless to save. Wherever you turned you beheld the inventions of a disordered intellect enshrined in the hearts of the multitude, and

wisdom had fled far from man. It was then that, as at the first creation, God said "Let there be light," and "there was light;" for the earth was blessed by the appearance of Abraham who, feeling the greatness of his Creator's ways, proclaimed to all around him that the works of man's hands are not the beings that can demand his worship, that nothing which springs from matter can be otherwise than perishable and decaying. It was he who first felt, when others who had been taught refused to believe, that there is indeed an Almighty Power who called forth the earth, the sea, the sky, and all that fills them, from the depths of non-existence, and that it is He to whom man should turn in all hours of joy, in all the moments of sorrow; since it is by his will that we are at ease, since it is by his dispensation that we are wounded. It was this teaching, which we may aptly style a new creation, which characterized the mission of Abraham, it is this instruction which constitutes the foundation on which our structure rests, to which we point as our best, as our only monument which we have erected in the world's history. For, when in the course of events the state which we had established by the labours of centuries, which at one time seemed fated to bid defiance to a united world, fell under the assaults of enemies that overran with fire and sword our beautiful inheritance, all that was perishable in human greatness fell and vanished, just as had vanished Assyria, and Babel, and Persia, and Egypt; the flames seized upon whatever offered food to their devouring fury, and men, who had boasted of their unbridled freedom, wandered forth in the chains of slavery to bend their necks under the yoke of ruthless conquer-

ors, of those who mocked the misfortunes of their captives. Yea, all that the world calls greatness, all that man calls glory fell on that frightful day when the blades of ten thousands of swords gleamed in the hands of Rome's countless legions, when severed heads filled up thy streets, O fallen Jerusalem! when thy courts, O sacred Zion! were choked with the scattered limbs of the brave defenders, who perished sooner than yield the fane which was the pride of their nation. Yea, on that day fell the power of Judah's sons, on that day sank the crown of Zion's daughters, and ended was the dominion of those who bore rule in Israel. But precisely that which would have marked the death-hour of every other nation, became the point of revival of our own race; and even whilst the temple's lurid flames yet shot up to the skies before the agonized view of those who had so often worshipped in its precincts, the light of its rebuilt splendour flashed before the hopeful view of those who felt themselves strengthened by the promised salvation of their God, whose chastisement they had evoked by their manifold sins. And thus, while they with awe-struck hearts watched in mute despair the progress of the destruction, which henceforward marked them as wanderers and outcasts, their unveiled eye beheld their temple rise again from its ashes in renewed and hitherto unapproached splendour, and their own son of David sitting on his throne, the pillars of which are righteousness and justice, establishing on earth a kingdom which is to stand unto eternity, encircling them with the armour of heavenly protection, and subduing the world by the potent spell of the divine wisdom, which was

handed down to their forefathers on Horeb from the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly, when truth descended from heaven and took up its abode among the children of man. The Israelites thus saw their outward symbols fall into the abyss which had swallowed up so many other nations; but they were convinced that a new life was given them; they felt that now they had to endure privation, contumely, scorn, because they were marked with the seal of the Lord's covenant, because in their features they carried the lineaments of a once renowned now hated ancestry, because by their actions and their belief they bore a decided testimony against the deeds and opinions which other nations professed. They felt then that, if it was impossible for them to triumph, it was still granted them to suffer all that man could inflict on them for defending the noble truths which were in their safe-keeping; and they resolved thus to be patient and submissive to what they considered to have been decreed from Heaven, and they took up the pilgrim's staff which was handed to them, and they glorified in their sorrow the Hand which in mercy had struck and wounded them, in order to recall them from their sinful ways, and to cement, by the blood which was shed freely by the saints, the union which had been loosened in the hours of peace and prosperity.

I need not tell you, brethren, how many sufferings we had to endure for eighteen hundred years, for no other reason than because we were Jews. History tells the sorrowful tale, how oppression exhausted its malice to invent new inflictions wherewith to crush the spirit of Israel's descendants; how false accusations

were constantly brought forward in order to afford some pretext for the cruelties which were heaped upon us; how every honourable pursuit was closed against us, and we were compelled to resort to mean and degrading employments, in order to find the wealth, which was the only thing which at the same time excited the cupidity of our tyrants, and afforded us the sole opportunity of appeasing their unholy thirst for the ransom of the life's blood of our best and wisest members. I could detain you for hours, were I to paint for you the agony which met us at every turn during the centuries of darkness which have passed over our heads, and which stain the annals of nearly all those nations, who profess to follow what they term a religion of peace, of good-will among men; but I forbear, I will not descant on what is known to all. All I want to do is to call your attention to the miraculous constancy which was displayed on all occasions, and in every country, and under all circumstances, by our suffering people, and that nothing ever caused them to despair of better times, and that nothing could induce the mass, whatever individuals might do in their agony of despair, to embrace, even in appearance, the opinions of the gentiles, and to sever their connexion with the house of Israel. Let me entreat you to carry your view back to the scenes which were enacted in Palestine, in Egypt, in Spain, in Italy, in France, in England, in Germany, to crush the spirit of our people, and to compel them to renounce their faith or die by the sword, the gibbet, the rack, and the flaming fire; recall for a moment the dungeons filled with those who, like yourselves, were guilty only of worshipping the one God

who created heaven and earth; look back upon the ships which fled from Spain's bloodstained coasts, laden with those who were cast forth in poverty and indigence, for being followers of the God of Jacob,—and then say whether you can do otherwise than glow with admiration for the noble martyrs who thus sacrificed all, because they would not, could not, renounce the faith which they had inherited from their fathers. It will strike you, that it must have been a holy thing which fortified their hearts, which could induce the aged sire to bid farewell to the sacred spot where reposed the earthly portion of a beloved wife who had preceded him to the mansions of glory; which could impel the tender maiden, who had been reared in splendour and luxury, whose hands had never toiled, whose feet had scarcely touched the ground, to fling from her the jewels which were to grace her on her bridal day, to venture forth alone amidst brothers who wandered into foreign climes, alone, without him whom she had chosen as the lord of her young affections, because he had forsaken his God in the fear of the sword which the oppressors of Israel wielded,—that it must have been a holy thing which rendered such as these, and many others like them, wanderers upon the wide face of the earth, which armed them with fortitude to endure all the privations, all the toil, which they might have avoided by claiming the new associations which their tyrants offered to their acceptance. Think of this, and then answer to yourselves, whether, with the change of circumstances, with the improvement in our condition, the principles for which our fathers fought and suffered have undergone any, nay the least change; whether the blessed

belief in the unity of our gracious Father in heaven is less true now than during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella in the Spanish Peninsula; whether the obligation to be true and faithful in our allegiance to the law of Sinai is of less binding force now than when the persecutions of European kings were braved, and their power defied, in order that we might not transgress voluntarily a single one of its glorious precepts! Surely there has been no change in our relative position to our God; He is precisely the same He ever was; He is as unerring in his wisdom as in the days of yore, and He has never repealed or altered the least of the precepts which He once communicated to us as the expression of his will. Nor has our obligation been removed. We have never received any dispensation to do away with, or to alter any of the commandments; no one can aver that any of our duties have in any wise been removed or diminished; nor can it be alleged that the march of enlightenment has destroyed or abridged the national allegiance which we owe to God, as subjects to their sovereign, as scholars to their teacher, as children to their father. No! God has not changed, and we are yet, to this day, to this hour, to this moment, Israelites, children of the same patriarchs, defenders of the same principles, which we were from the first moment of our institution as a nation, separate in our descent, different in our belief and conduct among the other families of the earth.

A wonderful change has, it is true, come over our condition within the recollection of the generation yet living, in the manner with which we are treated by those who differ from us in religious opinions. In

many countries the gentiles have learned to respect the Jews, and to appreciate their conduct and principles by a different standard from what they were formerly wont to do. In others again all civil disabilities have been removed; and in the country where my lot has been cast, and in this noble land where you, my beloved brethren, have erected the first house of prayer to the living God, the Lord of hosts, whose name be blessed, the laws know of no distinction between the Israelites and their fellow-citizens, and they are free to go and free to come, to assemble for prayer, to meet for instruction, to congregate as believers in their own faith, with no one to let or hinder them, with no one to question the legality of their so assembling. In these lands, too, they can act as their law demands of them; there is no disqualification attached to the observance of the Sabbath, there is no government tax on the food which they prepare in accordance with their customs; there is no exclusion imposed on them for introducing their sons into the covenant of Abraham, for sealing them with the sacred sign of circumcision, the outward token of the covenant between God and Abraham's seed; there is no one that can prevent them from erecting houses of prayer, and establishing schools in which to proclaim and teach their religion. There, therefore, we ought all to be zealous to stand firmly in support of the sacred cause intrusted to our charge; there should we show by our every act that we are worthy of the freedom we enjoy, not undeserving of the mercy of the Lord who has given us enlargement from our sorrows! But, alas! in modern times the bonds have been loosened; with the freedom from oppression,

our adhesion to the principles of Judaism has become constantly more lax and uncertain; and in modern times men have learned to set themselves above the law, and to interpose their own will and their own interpretation between the doctrines of religion and their observance of them. Besides, with the increase of the tranquillity from without, we have not learned to maintain peace within ourselves. The truth must be spoken: in many communities individuals have obtrusively offered their own sentiments, and if not able to rule according to their own views, have sown dissensions in the midst of our congregations. But, brethren! all this is not well; it is unbecoming to us as men who owe gratitude to our benevolent Father, who has wrought so many great things in our behalf, that we do not emulate and surpass our forefathers in devotion and attachment to the law. They could be obedient only in terror and apprehension. Whilst they commenced the Sabbath, they knew not but that before its termination they might, because of it, be led out to execution; whilst the child was carried forth to be received into the covenant, they knew not but that a cruel death might be impending over the faithful father and the devoted mother. Still they persevered, and acted up to their duties, rejoicingly, with undismayed courage. Yet now, where is our devotion to principles? to those principles which mark our place in the history of mankind? to those blessed monuments upon which we have been labouring unceasingly since the calling of Abraham?—But why should we not rejoice, as did our fathers, at the approach of the holy Sabbath? why should we not welcome its arrival as the heavenly bride which brings

peace and rest in her train to those who are weary with labour? whose weekly toil ceases when they are called to rest on the Lord's day from their unceasing pursuits? why should we not be sedulous in abstaining from those things which the Lord declares unclean, and render our body holy as the earthly temple of God, consecrating by this means our soul as the habitation of his holy spirit? why should we hesitate to offer our children to be impressed with the sign which is to mark them as servants of God? servants chosen from among men to be the bearers of truth and salvation to the ends of the earth? Why will we endeavour to sow dissensions in our communities, which have suffered, alas! too long from outward pressure, that they require all the healing and care which internal tranquillity alone can produce under the blessing of Heaven? What matters it to the individual "who rules," provided the community be well governed, and the glory of God be promoted by each one acting in unison and harmony? Why will we forget that every one cannot rule? that every one must yield something, if the public is to be truly benefitted, if the good cause is to be really promoted, if we sincerely desire to see our religion respected and its precepts obeyed? It is true, that in all this continent, with but one or two exceptions, our congregations are yet small, are, so to say, in their infancy; but for this very reason ought each sincere Israelite to contribute his share of influence, of means, and of personal service, to lay the foundation in such a manner that, in progress of time, the small may become a thousand, and the younger one a great and mighty nation. Only two things are required to pro-

mote the best interests of our people, especially in America,—union and forbearance. Nothing can be accomplished if each member of the community acts independently and in opposition to the others; never did any cause prosper under such circumstances, nor can ours do so, unless by the especial interposition of the divine favour. It is true, so many dangers have already passed over our heads, that we may freely assert our religion to be in no permanent danger from anything we can do to injure it. But such a flattering of ourselves will hardly excuse us in our own eyes, not to mention in the estimation of good men, but especially not in the judgment of the Lord, who sees the inward working of our sinful heart. No, we must alter all this, if we have even once acted so; it is no sign of weakness to amend an error, it is no evidence of an unsound judgment to yield if we are convinced of having been to blame in our former conduct. Though it is, therefore, true, that our religion can advance in spite of our own supineness and wrong-doing, though I can bear a cheerful testimony that, despite the misdoing of many individuals, our cause has progressed rapidly within the last ten years on this very continent, nay, if I err not, in this very city: there can be no doubt that it will progress much faster if we all unite for the same end, with one will, with one heart. Shall our religion, beloved brethren, appeal to you in vain for aid, for countenance, shall she always be suffering either from the wounds inflicted by her foes or the treachery of her faithless defenders? is Judaism always to be the suffering cause, never the triumphant? Yet, triumphant or suffering, Judaism will be dear to the souls of those who fear the Lord,

whose eye can penetrate into the recesses of futurity, and behold the Messiah on his throne, and the knowledge of God spread over all the earth! Judaism will be dear to the true Israelite, whether it is oppressed, or marches in glory over the fallen ruins of systems of error in the Lord's own appointed time. Still let us hope that there are many, many among the sons and daughters of Israel, who are here this day, who are zealous for their God and his law, and who will resolve to unite in acts, to be one in belief, in order to extend among the household of Jacob the love of the Lord, and the fear of his holy Name, by observing themselves all that their religion asks of them, and to aid all who come under their influence to follow in their footsteps in sincerity and simpleness of heart.

Of all the endearing epithets with which we address the Deity none appeals more strongly to the heart than that of Father. He is our Father in heaven. No term is more full of kindness as applied by Him, who is so pure and so holy, than his calling us his children. Of our own accord we could never have assumed the title of God's children; still, in the record of his will, written by his servant Moses, God addresses us as such in the following words, which we find in the commencement of the fourteenth chapter of Deuteronomy:

בנים אתם לה׳ אלהיכם : דבר׳ יד׳ א׳ :

"Ye are children to the Lord your God;"

by which we are certified that we are objects of especial care to our Creator, who, in order to render us proper subjects of his kingdom, has sanctified us by

his commandments, that we might walk before Him and be perfect, as He spoke to Abraham. If we all, as individual Israelites, are especially the children of the Most High, chosen to be the bearers of his glorious standard of truth and faith before the sons of man: it follows as a necessary consequence, that we all ought to regard each other as brothers in faith, in hopes, in duty, and are therefore bound by the ties of love to walk together in due affection, and to aid each other in the attainment of the utmost perfection of which our nature is capable in this state of probation and sin. Perfection, absolute and unconditional, is not asked; our Father knows our frame, knows that we are dust. He requires only that we do all which lies in our power; but we also must not expect too much of one another; we must bear with each other's failings, and endeavour to improve others by gentle means and brotherly admonition, where we see that a wrong has been done.—Do you feel the full weight of this? beloved hearers! Are you penetrated with your relation to your Maker, with your relation to all Israel? Remember, God is your Father; it is not to injure you that He gave you a law of duty and precept, but to render you more worthy of his favour and mercy; not to exclude others who may differ from you in religion, but to preserve you each and all as parts of a holy people who are to lead by their presence, silently, but surely, many who do not now believe, to fall down and worship the Holy One of Israel. Remember, too, that all Israelites have received the same mission, from the highest to the least; they are all servants of the Most High, messengers of his mercy. Aid them therefore in their endeavours

to be obedient; encourage the faithful, confirm the wavering, and assist those with advice and instruction who are ignorant of the ways of the Lord. Look upon the Creator as your Father, whose mercies claim your gratitude; regard all the world as your neighbours, whom you, as children of God, are bound to love and serve, no matter what may be their country, what their faith; with all, however, you are bound more to the Israelite; you must act with him, for him; you must endeavour to induce him to be a true and faithful servant in the same cause in which you are engaged, and draw him towards your common Parent by the ties of kindred and of love. What a delightful picture of union and blessedness presents itself thus to our view! One God our Father! the whole human family the object of our tenderness! the whole house of Israel our fellow-labourers! and each individual guided by those around him unto the gates of righteousness! entering therein by the accomplishment of the good which his God assigned to him in his sphere of action. Do you feel it then to be your task to be thus engaged? are you willing to be Israelites in deed more than in name? If so, which we fervently trust to be your will, resolve from henceforward to devote yourselves to the blissful task of self-regeneration, in order that the glory of the Lord may be spread over the earth, and his precepts be obeyed by all who are with us of the seed of Jacob, the chosen of the Lord, the servant in whom He has found delight.

And may the goodness of the Lord guide us unto the light which is undeceiving, and permit us to enter his presence with songs of thanksgiving when our

spirits return to his holy throne, when our race is run, and our task is ended. May this be his will. Amen.

Ab 24th.
Aug. 9th. } 5604.

DISCOURSE XVIII.

THE SIN OF SLANDER.

When we contemplate, O Lord! the magnificence of thy works, we must be penetrated by our own littleness, and struck with the daring with which we transgress thy precepts. We measure ourselves against Thee, and presume to be wiser than thy instruction. Yet how good art Thou! Thou crushest not the worm in his presumption, but waitest for his repentance and his return to thy mercy. Thou sendest forth thy thunders, but they purify the air we breathe, and thy lightning's awful arrows fall unharming at our feet. Thou pourest forth the abundance of thy waters, and they foam, and they roar, and they rush onward in majesty; but we are permitted to contemplate the spectacle untouched by the power that bids these waters roar, that causes them to flow onward. O Father! teach us then to feel thy greatness, show us how we may be humble because of thy power; in order that we may walk faithfully before Thee all our days, and be obedient in all things wherein we have received thy instruction; that thy kingdom may be speedily spread abroad to banish

the reign of sin from the face of the earth, and to establish righteousness in the place of iniquity; that thy saints may rejoice, and thy servants be glad because of the abundance of thy salvation, which will then overspread the world and cover the earth with the knowledge of thy will, as the waters cover the deep, in the days of thy anointed, the son of David, whom Thou wilt send to redeem us a second time from gentile bondage, even as Thou hast spoken. Amen.

BRETHREN!

The essence of all religion is, as you well know, comprised within very narrow limits, which are: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself." Still, narrow as these limits may appear to us, they afford us labours which will fill up our whole existence, and happy indeed will we be if we have been faithful in both the requirements which our God asks of us. It is true, that very often in the pride of a self-sufficient egotism we say that we love God; but every opportunity is seized to gratify our own appetite, careless whether we be acting in conformity with religion or not. We would gladly persuade ourselves that we truly love our neighbour, there is something so odious in the thought that we hate him; and still how seldom does the love due to all withhold us from acting solely for ourselves, regardless who suffers. Is this owing to the absolute depravity of the human heart, that it needs must prompt wrong actions? or is the fault one which is within our own control? If

the former, we would necessarily be irresponsible, because we would thus be acting under compulsion, being without any power over ourselves; but if the second, then ought we to be very careful to lay hold of all the means which will enable us to carry out the problem of our life. We will not now argue whether or not we have this power; all experience teaches us, and so does the Bible, that we are free to act, consequently there is no compulsion why we should offend against the love due to our God, against the affection due to our neighbour. But we should look within ourselves, and search why and wherefore we often offend? why and wherefore we are not more perfect?—In a word, it is an inordinate self-love which stands between us and our duties, an over-estimation of ourselves, in comparison with others, even including the Supreme Being who has fashioned us in his image. Whenever any thing is prescribed to us, and we are told it is one of our duties, how quickly do we feel rebellion springing up within us to refuse compliance; simply because it asks something of us which we have not yet resolved to grant, we look upon ourselves as the sovereigns, the recipients as our vassals, hence we grudgingly grant, we eagerly seize. But do not arraign Providence as in fault, for having thus endowed your souls; it is a feeling in itself leading you to love others as yourselves; for if you had no regard for your own comforts, you certainly could not feel that others have any wants. The miser who shuts himself up in his naked cabin without a fire to chase away the winter's cold, without a light to cheer him during the gloom of night, cannot pity the sufferings of the poor whose hard

fate compels them to dispense with what you call the necessaries of life, though to them they would be luxuries; he feels not their wants, for he has slain the desire for them in himself; and hence he spurns the petitioner who claims his pity in his destitute condition. It is not then the possession of the feeling of self-love which is an evil, it is the illegitimate carrying out of the same which is the bane of life; it is because we *only* see ourselves among the mass of beings, not because we see ourselves *among* them. We are ourselves those whom we should love, that is conceded; but we should take heed that we love not ourselves alone. But one thing more is needed to correct the evil of our nature, it is that we constantly bear before our eyes, in characters of light, that we are servants of God, who sees all our acts and knows all our thoughts; and this will prompt us to be obedient to Him and kind to our fellow-men, even whilst seeking our own advancement, even whilst we labour in a pursuit which in the eyes of others claims our whole attention. This contemplation opens a wide field to our view, which would take a long time to elucidate as its importance demands; but it is best not to embrace too much at once; we grow wiser and better if we learn in detail. Let us therefore confine our reflections this day to but one single point, and let us hope that we may be improved by this method of self-examination, which is recommended to us from the very highest Source.

One of the best methods, if not the only one, to grow wiser and better is to search the Scriptures to discover what God has written concerning us. In that blessed book he has not taught us how to build

houses, how to discover the latest arcana of sciences, but how to build up our happiness, how to discover our own insignificance, and how to appreciate his goodness and truth. The great prophet who was sent to teach us the law, gave us in himself a glorious example of the self-sacrificing love which is demanded of us. He indeed walked before the people not merely as a leader of their armies in battle and of the senate in council, but of the individuals in their path of life, of the Israelites proper as servants of the Most High. In every thing Moses was the chief, in every thing the son of Amram rises preëminent. Whatever voluntary agency he may have had in writing down the words which filled his soul, he never sought to gloss over his own defects or those of his household; he speaks as though he felt himself mortal, he writes as though he knew no shame, no family-pride, while labouring in the sacred cause of Heaven, which is at last the cause of Israel, the cause of all mankind.—Let us then revert to the words of the Creator written down by the noblest of men; let us heed the warnings which we find recorded, and take care that the inspiration which we thence draw shall urge us on to become wiser and better.

Let us then consider a remarkable verse in this day's portion:

זכור את אשר עשה ה׳ אלהיך למרים בדרך בצאתכם ממצרים: דבר׳ כר׳ ט׳:

"Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam by the way, when ye went forth from Egypt." Deut. xxiv. 9.

Of all the foibles which adhere to our nature as dark

spots of disgrace and evidences of a diseased mind, there is not one more odious than the habitual fault-finding with our fellow-men. It is a disease which originates in self-approbation, and when once deeply rooted it is almost beyond cure. There is a class of beings, meet them when you may, they are filled to overflowing with news, not rarely of a scandalous nature, which they retail with evident delight. Nothing is done in their neighbour's house, but it is sure to reach their ears; and whatever is transacted at a distance is also discovered by a thousand little spiteful petty manœuvres, through subordinates or servants; and the greater the disgrace which the transactions are calculated to fasten on the absent parties, the greater is the pleasure with which they are related. It matters not to the tale-bearer who is wounded, whose character suffers, it is enough he has news; he knows he is listened to by an eager audience, and he is gratified at being able to turn the laugh upon others. Is it an absolute malignity of feeling which is the cause of this? is it not that both relater and listener are intent upon injuring the absent? Perhaps not; they may do it from mere idleness, from want of thought; but the evil they inflict is not the less great. A man may be in good repute, and be actually a worthy member of society; but as no one is perfect, he may, in a moment of excitement, do or say what he will regret in his soberer moments. Now let a single act done or word spoken, when a man acts under excited feelings, be carried abroad with all the embellishments which malice or thoughtlessness knows so well how to add to the simplest deed, and what becomes of his hard-earned reputation? he

stands like a blasted tree, suddenly struck by the destructive fluid of a thunder-cloud; he is bereft of reputation or friends, simply because kindness was not there to throw the mantle of oblivion over one wrong act, over one wicked word. Scandal was there with ready ear, with eager eyes, with open mouth; she has seized upon his weakness, she has flown off upon the wing of rumour; and now men point at him as one who has enjoyed an undeserved reputation, as one who has disgraced his calling by his unexpected wickedness. But what would the world have suffered, had one dereliction never been made known? that one unguarded word should have dropped upon the air unheeded and forgotten? Nothing whatever. Were it indeed that one sin would stamp us as irretrievably lost, that one hasty word would prove us unworthy of any farther confidence: then indeed would it be necessary for all of us to be constantly on the watch to seek for every little wrong, the smallest even, which would, if known, cast odium upon our brother; then indeed would we be bound to honour the vigilant sentinel who would in kindness point out to our abhorrence every one who in the least deviated from the righteous path. But where is the perfect man who never sins? where is the perfect woman who has never offended? Let us appeal to the fault-finder, let us invoke the conscience of the tale-bearer, let us question the eager recipient of his brother's shame, whether he be so void of sin, so free from error that he would be willing to lay his own life perfectly open to the gaze of a censorious world? Every one knows the answer such an appeal would meet with; no one man living would like the vulgar

eye to gloat upon his every act, to fasten upon his every thought. To God alone, all-knowing as He is, can we be willing to submit our case; for He understands our frame, He has created us, and will pardon where his love must interfere to decree for us mercy and forgiveness; but man—short-sighted mortal, let him not judge us, let his malice be banished from our hearth; he would judge from ignorance, from premises as he understands them, and cast a stone where the hand of kindness should be held out; he would condemn where a friendly word might produce a lasting reformation.

Therefore does the Bible admonish us: "Remember, what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam." Who was Miriam? The prophet-sister of the great prophet who was the instrument of writing these very words we have quoted. She had been associated with Aaron and with Moses in the work of the regeneration of Israel; she had stood by, whilst yet herself a youthful maiden, whilst her brother was exposed amidst the reeds of the Nile, to snatch him from the grasp of Pharaoh's heartless executioners; she too had led forth the women of Israel when the mighty hosts of Egypt's king had been sunk in the waters of the Red Sea, and responded to the glorious song of thanksgiving left to the world by her illustrious brother. The spirit too had communed with her; the visions of things yet undone, of ages yet unborn had been unfolded in the dim distance to her enraptured view. Such was Miriam, one of the loveliest characters ever shadowed forth, for Moses never describes minutely, in Scripture. And yet she was punished, signally punished, and disgraced before the whole people who

looked upon her with well-founded veneration. And why? Because she had spoken against Moses for having married an Ethiopian woman, and arrogated to herself an equal rank, because to her, too, the Lord had spoken. We are not sufficiently informed of the whole early career of Moses, whether the wife spoken of be Zipporah, called perhaps Ethiopian, from being a foreigner, a non-Israelite, or whether it refers to a previous marriage with an actual native of that distant land. Enough that Miriam spoke to her elder against the purity of the character of her younger brother, thereby arrogating to herself a standing above him, whilst she boastfully looked upon herself as equally endowed with the spirit. We have no reason to suppose that Miriam spoke otherwise than the truth: and still see the consequences. No sooner had the boast and reproach escaped her lips, than the awful Majesty summoned her and her listening brother to judgment; they are confounded at the rebuke, and soon the priest had, in his anguish, to declare his guilty sister affected with the leprosy, which consigned her to a solitary exclusion without the camp, a circumstance which revealed her transgression to the whole people, who then were justly taught to look upon every infliction of punishment as a mark of divine disapprobation.—The confession of Aaron of his own and Miriam's folly and sin, induced the prophet to appeal for mercy to Him who had so often favoured him. But the prayer remained unheeded; her Father had rejected her for the time being, until the guilt had been atoned for, by a week's seclusion in the dwelling of the unclean.

Reflect on this. The prophetess Miriam, the pious

matron in Israel, the undaunted heroine in many a trying scene, the honoured by all the people, a companion of the lepers, of the outcasts of all grades, because she had sinned; a mark of divine wrath, because she had slandered a brother. Well are we therefore reminded to "remember what the Lord did unto Miriam on the way, when we went forth from Egypt." Let us take heed of the warning, and not give a license to our tongue to speak evil against the absent, by which their character or standing may suffer in the estimation of others. Let us reflect thus: If the one who was great among the greatest, if the woman whose name is entwined indelibly, whose memory is impressed unfadingly in the hearts and history of Israel, incurred punishment for an undue use of calumnious speech: how much more must we expose ourselves to the dread judgment, we who are steeped in sin, whose hearts are filled with evil, for casting censure on our fellow-men, for depriving them by our heedlessness or malice of that reputation which is honestly theirs. There indeed may be occasions when it becomes necessary that the truth should be spoken; for instance, before a court of justice, where we may assume that the Divinity is present to aid the judges in their decision, if they will turn their ear to the appeal of justice; or when the wicked should attempt to deceive the unwary by a specious artfulness or well-disguised deceit; or to point the finger of scorn against those in power, who, by their example or teaching, endeavour to mislead to sin those, who believe them sincere in their pretended sanctity. In all such cases, and some others, which will readily suggest themselves to your own

good judgment, it no doubt becomes the duty of every honest, fearless Israelite, to speak out without fear or favour, "because the judgment belongs to the Lord." But this is no authority nor reason for that private slander which dwells upon the foibles of others, which loves to seize on the wrongs of our neighbours, not to reform them, not to promote the ends of justice, not to warn the innocent, but to elevate ourselves in our own imagination above the level of our fellows, to place them in a position where the finger of public odium may point at them, where their character or their influence may be destroyed, without their knowing the base hand which has struck the deadly blow against their peace.—Those who have themselves suffered from the tongue of slander, and who is there that has not? those who have been unjustly suspected, causelessly assailed by public odium, without knowing the poisonous source whence the evil flowed, ought not to need my admonition to be themselves cautious how they give unbridled license to their own tongue. In no one thing does the moral doctrine "What is unpleasant to thee do not unto thy neighbour" apply with more force than in the fault of slandering, without any other motive than the mere love of gossip, not to mention if malice be the moving principle which arms our tongue against the peace of our neighbour. Some one may perhaps say, that the fault which we reveal to the world would have been rendered evident by another one actuated by worse motives than ourselves, and that hence there is a species of kindness in being ourselves the first to announce the news. But this is a poor excuse for a great wrong.

If really we love any object, we will be most anxious to conceal his failings from the eyes of the world, if we cannot excuse them even in our own heart. This is as we would act by ourselves; since we surely are not willing to make our own faults known, though we cannot justify our conduct, or help condemning our own natural defects. By the way, what we think as likely to fall under the notice of others may, by some lucky circumstance, escape their observation altogether; and hence, if we remain silent, the world at large may continue ignorant of our friend's wrong-doing; hence instead of doing him a service by spreading abroad a knowledge of his fault, we do him an injury by drawing the attention of the world to his course, which otherwise might have escaped animadversion. You will readily understand that I speak not of crimes, in which all the world has an interest that the criminal be exposed, but to those acts, little in themselves, to those words, trifling if taken in connexion with an entire transaction, which being spoken of or repeated leave an impression on the mind of the listener, different from what they ought to bear if properly understood.—I speak, in short, of slander in its proper sense, which injures the sufferer and confers no benefit upon others by the exposure it produces. Many a worthy character has been insinuated away, where open accusation would have been signally rebuked. Such expressions, "Our neighbour is certainly not as good as he is represented;" "I wonder what you see to admire in him;" "He better say as little as possible;" and many others of like import, though not uttered with malice, may destroy a man's reputation, though you, who utter

these words, may mean but very little if any thing at all by them; for it may reasonably be supposed by strangers to him, that your knowledge of his character enables you to appreciate him more correctly than mere strangers, and hence you will engender suspicion in their minds, which it will be impossible to eradicate ever after; and in good truth you do him a great injury by depriving him of an intercourse with those who might, had they become acquainted with his good qualities, been converted into sincere personal friends and admirers of his virtues.

In all these cases and others of a kindred kind, you are told to remember what God has done unto Miriam. His displeasure was rendered evident by the punishment that befell one of the most eminent in Israel, and be assured that this same hatred of slander yet obtains in the will of God as in those early days of our espousal as the nation of the Lord. He wills that we should love one another, and whatever true love demands of us all, even that should be our mode of life. On the contrary, how delightful it is to hear persons speaking well of the absent; how pleasant it is to hear a friend stand up in defence of one who is not present to plead his own cause; how soothing it is to hear an eloquent female advocate the good name of one who hears her not, though some wrong may be chargeable to her; for all display evidently that the love of the neighbour is strongly rooted in their heart, that the precept of the Lord "And thou shalt love thy neighbour like thyself" is something more to them than a mere empty sound. And besides all this, how many contentions are not avoided by this display of good-will. One man is

perhaps with some cause incensed against another; a friend of either is present and endeavours to soothe the excited feelings; he tries to find some excuse, where he is bound to condemn, and by degrees induces the offended to forego his wrath, to give up the threatened retaliation, perhaps to stay the murderous weapon which he meant to sheathe in a brother's heart. O it is good to belong to the peace-makers, to that class whose aim it is to foster kindness, to banish enmities; and sooner would the lover of God be classed among these, though humble be their lot, than among those who sit amid the nobles of the land, whose wealth is great, and who live upon the dainties of the world. Theirs is indeed the kingdom of Heaven, "they love peace and pursue peace," and they spread abroad good-will among men, and their exemplary and lovely piety will lead others to bow at the foot of the throne of their Master whose kingdom has such faithful servants. Of them it never can be said that they have produced strife among brothers; of them it never can be said that they have armed the hand of one citizen against the other; and if their good nature occasionally renders them the dupes of the designing, if they in their simplicity of heart occasionally praise the undeserving: I would sooner that my portion be with them than with those good judges of human nature whose suspicion and bad temper lead them always to think ill of every one, and to spare none whenever any fault is detected which malicious, vulgar people delight to hear.

The peace-maker can walk abroad, amidst acquaintances, amidst strangers; he is not afraid to meet any man face to face; he has no concealment, because

intentionally his tongue injures no one. But the busybody who knows the business and speech of all his neighbours, and whose heedlessness does not spare the stranger, with how much trepidation does he not meet his fellow-men. Many he has designedly, some accidentally injured, and he is in constant terror that his misconduct may become known to his victims, through the very persons whom he entertained with the failings of others. There can be no sincerity in friendship, if one condemns a friend in his absence; there must be secret enmity, if we judge a man in the worst light, when by a different aspect of the case we might find an excuse for his actions; and at length there must be malice, if we allow ourselves to condemn without informing ourselves carefully of the bearings of an absent friend's conduct.—Society cannot exist in peace, if malice rankles in the heart of its members; there is no security, no peace in a city, if man looks upon man with suspicion and distrust; nor can there be religion, nor can there be a heart consecrated to God, if upon light causes we sit in judgment upon one another, and make the failings of our neighbours the subject of a pleasant conversation or a theme for spending an agreeable evening. But, brethren, the curse of slander is one much too common among us all; it empoisons the springs of life, and embitters but too frequently all social intercourse. There may be many whose knowledge of the world enables them to dispense with the good opinion of persons who are indifferent to them; but there is unfortunately a much larger class who are sensitively alive to the least breath of slander, who shrink instinctively from public censure. If no religion re-

strains you then, let common pity for suffering humanity stay your trifling speech; reflect that which is so pleasant to you may be death and destruction to one whom you would designedly be the last to injure. And remember one thing more, that those very persons who are so sensitive and delicate are the very ones who feel the kindest towards others, who will the soonest serve their neighbours from motives of pure benevolence. And if, as we are taught by the wise Solomon, there is life and death in the power of the tongue, let us endeavour that our tongue, that great gift which more than anything else distinguishes man from the brute, shall only be employed in promoting good-will among men, and uttering the praises of the Most High. And the God who in his mercy visited Miriam with leprosy, that she might be an example to others, will surely reward us for obeying his will, and doing his behest in the duty of brotherly love; inasmuch as He values all his creatures alike, and knows how to reward those who fear Him with an exceeding great blessing, in a life where there is no contention, no hatred, no malice, but where all speaks peace, where all proclaims the glory of our Maker, where all are servants freed from the dross of this sinful earth, purified by the faith which has opened for them the portals of everlasting happiness. May our portion be with them, and may the grace of our Father be with us here and in yonder life, even as we hope in Him. Amen.

Elul 8th.
Aug. 23d. } 5604.

DISCOURSE XIX.

THE COMING YEAR.

God of righteousness and truth! how abundant is thy goodness which Thou extendest over thy children, how glorious the mercy with which Thou watchest over their actions! When righteous they obtain thy favour, though their acts be so insignificant, as the deeds of man must ever be; and if they arise in rebellion to gainsay thy will, Thou wilt not destroy, but waitest for their repentance, and warnest them in time that they may return unto Thee. But even in chastisement we behold Thee as the Father of spirits; because Thou purifiest the child of sin in the furnace of tribulation, that he may be purged from transgression and be rendered worthy again of thy favour. O do then act towards us even according to thy goodness of which our fathers have spoken, and which they have ever received at thy hands; send us blessing and prosperity in our labour, that we may not toil in vain and spend our days in fruitless repining and hopes deferred, which render the heart faint and desponding. But if success should elevate our heart to value itself unduly and to forget thy holy precepts, then let thy rod fall on us to remind us that we are thy servants, who are bound to obey thy every will, to listen dutifully to thy every word. So that we may always feel that we are under thy august protection and amenable to thy justice, by which knowledge our life will be rendered happy and our souls be made

pure, to be fitted to dwell in the secret of thy tabernacle, in a world without sorrow, in a life without death, where the sun never sets, and where thy glory ever shines. Amen.

Brethren!

A few days more only will elapse before this year will have closed, and when another will dawn upon us with all its uncertainties of joy and sorrow, of light and shadow to which our life is subject. How solemn it is to reflect upon the past, how fearful to think of what is to come! Whoever is among us that has had enjoyments but must feel that his pleasures have not been unmixed, that his brightest day was not unclouded! If even pleasure opened her gladsome receptacle, and poured out into his bosom exquisite sensations, and brought him some ecstatic moments: was not some pain lingering under the pleasant surface, and made itself perceived in the most joyous hours? There is always in life, as in nature, an undercurrent which is not perhaps perceptible to the naked eye; to the inattentive observer the surface of the stream may appear as smooth as the tranquil mirror, with not a ripple to disturb the glassy plain; but launch your bark on the silvery tide, and how resistlessly are you forced backward, and each step in advance has to be achieved at the expense of all the exertion you are capable of. Or even if you glide smoothly down with the current, if pleasant gales fill your sails and waft you swiftly to the desired haven: O how often then are sunken rocks hidden in your course; your vessel strikes upon the unknown danger, your sails shake out, as it were, the breeze that

erst impelled them, the timbers are riven one by one from the sides of the bark that was to bear you on in safety, and you float alone, forsaken, unaided upon the stormy flood which now foams and boils up around you on all sides. This is life! this its course! The observation, perhaps, is trite, like a thricetold tale; you have heard this before; you have seen it in books written by men of all ages; true, too true; but this is because all men have experienced the same fate, have had to feel the same sensations of sorrow and disappointment; and hence many have expressed what experience has forced upon their consideration. But should we not be told it again by those whom we know ourselves? are we not to be reminded of the truth, as it is the truth, because others have heard the same lesson already? If so, the work of the moralist would soon be over; one man indites a truth, and it would be useless to carry it farther, because the truth had once been spoken. But alas! so perverse is the human heart, so often is it lulled by false security, that the lessons which others have heard do not reach it, unless it has been itself made to test them by experience; and the accumulated wisdom of ages is passed unheeded, as books the language of which is not understood, and the characters of which are no longer in use among the living. What good is it then to the individual, that moral reflections upon the uncertainty of earthly things have been indulged in before? He too must think upon them, not once, not twice, but every day of his life; for every day he lives he is exposed to the vicissitudes which rob him of pleasure, of friends, of wealth, and of life; and in the very things, on which he

had placed his firmest reliance of success, he finds his greatest source of disappointment; and to be induced to reflect in this manner, and to profit thereby in his moral and religious conduct, he ought to be often reminded of the mutability of his fortune and the mortal termination of his earthly existence.—And does not nature herself preach this lesson in all her operations, manifold as they are? Look abroad in the early spring, when the chill of winter is just passing away. Every shrub, every tree, every herb, every flower seems to feel the impulse which the renewed heat imparts to its being, and playfully it opens its leaflets to the warm fanning of the vernal breezes. Anon a rich profusion of white and pinkish blossoms covers every bough along the whole landscape, and with each hour new joys, and new life, and new beauties spring into being. But speedily the blossoms disappear, and the young fruit seems to cleave for protection closely knitted to its parent stem, as if fearing to venture alone upon the path of existence pointed out by the hand of the Creator. Soon, however, it ventures out more boldly, assumes new colours, varying from those of the leaves among which it has hitherto been nestling, and tempts you by the richness of its hue to desire it for yourselves. Thus is summer clad in all the variety of ripening fruit, as before the spring was the time of flowers and blossoms. And now the autumn steals peacefully along; the heats of the preceding season have passed away, the sun has put on a more lovely radiance, which now does not dazzle the eye as when he ruled in all his vigour of renewed strength; the damp of the morning reminds you of the approaching bleak winter, and on every branch and bough the

late fruit is prepared for your sustenance, ready to be gathered for your winter store. Already the fields are bared of their harvest, and the work of nature seems now finished; the green leaves change their hue, and the dying colours, in far more beautiful tints, supply the place of the former uniformity; and before all is finished a greater degree of glory seems to be cast over every object. But this too passes away, and stripped is the forest of its loveliness, desolate are the fields, and the gardens present but the naked stalks of that which once was beautiful, and the cold and fierce blast of the snow-storm howls among the naked oaks and the dark gloomy pines; and the rivers that formerly sparkled gaily in the sunlight, and reflected like a mirror the beauty that lined their banks, now lie frozen, stiff, and cold, and oppose no barrier to the daring foot that ventures on their surface. Is not this life? a true picture of what we ourselves have been, are, and will be again? We too escape from the bosom of night into being; our strength and intellect bud, open, and blossom; we too are decked out with the beauty of infantile years, with the grace and vigour of maturity; and then come on the weakness and uncertainty of declining years; the hair turns gray, the eye becomes dim, the step falters, and youthful associations are but a thing of memory; and lastly the body sinks into the cold, dark grave, and the clod of the valley rattles hollow upon the lid of the coffin, and we are left to rest till that glorious morning, when the graves will be opened to immortality, and the earth will cast forth her dead. For to us, too, like to the ice-covered lake or the snow-clad earth, the reviving sun of righteousness will arise

"with healing on his wings," when our fetters of death and silence will be broken, and our voice will be tuneful in praises of the Most High on every mountain, in every valley, as are the forests filled with the melody of the feathered tribe, when the genial warmth of spring calls them forth from their hiding-places, where they had passed the death-like months of the inhospitable winter.

And do we understand the lesson as it should be understood? or are we indifferent, hardened, and unwilling listeners? O, how do we cling to the present, with what a grasp do we seize what we have acquired, with what energy do we toil to gain what we desire! But what avails it all? Grant that we have accumulated, enjoyed, retained—what has it availed us? has it stilled the longing for more? killed our desire for yet farther acquisition?—How vain is such a supposition! we sigh over the past; the brightest day has never closed without its overclouding shadows; we have felt, perhaps, dazzled by the too great brightness, we have been cloyed by too much sweetness. And when we have been uniformly successful, we have felt the want of excitement, and with the stimulant of necessity removed many have fallen into habits of indolence, and longed for some pursuit to fill up their vacant hours.—Yes, the past is full of instruction, and teaches that, be our lot joyous or sorrowful, there is something more than animal pleasures and tangible advantages which is to fill the void in our heart, that there is a craving which is never at rest, till we have applied a remedy unconnected with the outward circumstances of our existence.

Equally dark is the future. Stand at the brink of

life, if I may use such an expression, and cast your view into the black abyss that yawns at your feet: and does not your courage fail? do you feel the assurance of perfect safety which vanity occasionally teaches you to display before the world? You look down the sides of the gulf; they appear steep and inaccessible; you cast your eye about for a friendly hand to lead you upon the narrow path which you espy after a long search in the distance; but you seek in vain; you are alone, and still you are hurried on, you must venture on your perilous journey unaided. But you advance at length; the steepness by degrees vanishes; the narrow path is reached, and it is not so narrow as you at first imagined; and the nearer you approach the black abyss, the more it loses its gloom, the clearer becomes the water that fills it to its brim. Nor are you alone any longer as you progress; there are other pilgrims travelling with you on the same journey who have approached by different by-paths the road you are pursuing; and you are greeted with a friendly smile, as though they had met a long-lost friend. And when at length you stand by the flood which you must pass, since there is no turning back, because the road has become impassable by new obstructions which have sprung up behind you, you find a bridge which you in your outset could not discover, and it invites you to venture over to the land beyond, which lies smiling in the distance, and whence the fragrance of undying flowers comes greeting you, even whilst you hesitate to enter on the new destiny which is before you; and when this bridge, too, is passed, as pass it you must, you can then with complacency look back upon the journey you have ac-

complished, and think you have travelled well on the road marked out for you. Thus does the future appal us with its uncertainties and doubts, and thus we look with apprehension upon any event in its commencement. The mystery cannot be solved by reckless daring, nor can the dangers which we may have to encounter be lessened by our denying their existence. But since we must face them, since we must venture on our journey despite of all the difficulties: ought we not to look around to discover something which could cheer us on our lonely way, which could dispel the gloom of solitude, which could render us capable to endure the dangers and hardships which we cannot avoid? We know that our Creator is merciful, or else He would not have arrayed nature in such a garment of beauty as He has done; He must be good, for every thing has enjoyments, which it obtains from his undeserved bounty. Should there then be no aid provided for man? nothing to cheer him up, and to carry him forward on his perilous way with safety?—Ay, there is! and it is even the narrow path, as it seems to us in our life's journey, which our bodily eyes discover at a great distance as dark and uninviting. In a word, it is the religion of Israel, which has been bestowed on us as the gift of God, in which we recognize his mercy and his goodness, and which eases for us the perilous journey on which from our very birth we are destined to venture. Were it that we had absolutely speaking no guide, no directing star to point out the way we should go: what would life be worth to us? better far we had never been born, better we had never seen the light of the sun than "to be in such utter darkness lying,"

as we would be, if we were so miserable, so lost, so alone. But now name me *one* situation in life where we are not guided, and that truly, by the grace of the Lord? In childhood we have the command to obey our father and mother; here is a plain direction for us, we cannot go astray, whilst they too obey the same precepts which have been given for our common instruction. And when death has struck down these true friends by our side, and we are absolutely alone, and left to our own guidance, then have we the written Word which is to point out the path which we are to walk in. Nothing is left unnoticed, nothing is asked which we cannot accomplish. The duties may appear onerous, the sacrifices unpalatable to our obduracy; but are they impossible? are they impracticable? And to these questions we are compelled to answer with an emphatic negative; for ordinarily there is not a single reason why we cannot be obedient; and but rarely indeed, perhaps not once in a lifetime, is there a case where absolute necessity compels us to forego what we are taught to be our duty.

Yet even farther does the efficiency of religion extend itself. It not only teaches us duty, but it inspires us with hope, with confidence, with certainty on the dark path which we are pursuing. It is ever ready to inspire us with courage, with perseverance, with hope; for it teaches us that all which is, is from God, all that happens, happens by his dispensation, and that, as every thing belongs to Him, and is the object of his care and benevolence, every thing must likewise tend to a beneficial purpose, to an ultimately good result. But, as our wisdom is not sufficient to discover the connexion of events, as we are surrounded

with the doubts and uncertainties which attach themselves to our being, we are certified that we must not measure the wisdom of our Maker by our puny standard of intellect, nor dare to decide upon events by the hasty judgment which we may arrive at under the pressure of difficulties which beset our way. No, the Creator's wisdom is far outreaching what we have received, great as this blessing is; his view penetrates at once into all the chambers and recesses of existence, whilst to us chamber only after chamber is opened, whilst only one recess as it rises up on the surface of existence is revealed to our eyes at one time. To us therefore a thing may at the moment appear wrong and unjust, because we only see it from one point of view; still let us but wait, and what appeared harsh and unworthy of the Goodness which rules our destiny, becomes an evidence of consummate wisdom and overshadowing mercy, and the links of events when combined present a chain of unsurpassed excellence, though each individual in its disjointed state appeared to our imperfect vision fraught with evil and deformity. It is thus that, if we will only allow our good genius, our inclination for virtue, to prevail over our evil destiny, which is at last nothing but our impulse for evil, to draw us upon the narrow and uninviting path of religious trust, of religious hope, of religious duty: life will lose many of its bitter moments, and we will be filled with submission to the divine will, and feel joy in our lot, when otherwise we would have sunk into despondency, and been a prey to gloomy melancholy. And how dreadful is that sensation of loneliness which the man without hope experiences in his pilgrimage! All light is shut

out from his path, and the steep defile of existence stretches out in unlimited extent before him. There is to him nothing but a rocky desert in prospect, not a green spot for his agonized vision to rest upon. It matters not in this respect with what burden the hopeless one is laden, whether it be the load of empire, the uncounted wealth of Korah, or the toilsome sufferings of the day-labourer—it is all the same: if there be no light within the heart, life is a trackless, gloomy desert, full of dangers and apprehensions which destroy every sensation of pleasure, even whilst we are filled to overflowing with what the world calls happiness. If, however, we have schooled ourselves to know the Lord as He is represented to us in his own word, what do we then experience in all our actions and trials? but that there is a benevolent Father watching over us, that nothing which we do or suffer will escape his cognizance, and that, as soon as He may deem it enough, the trials will be ended to give place to joy and enlargement, springing from sources over which the malevolence of enemies cannot have any control. Such a hope will sweeten solitude; for our God is near to share the lonely cell, or watch the solitary couch, though this be the couch of sickness; we feel his presence when we labour in the field, or when we toil in the hours of night by the dim candle which flickers fitfully in its socket; we will stand before Him when joy numbers us in her gladsome train, or when the tumultuous shouts of our fellow-men hail us as the exalted of the earth; and whatever is thus bestowed, be it worldly good or evil, will be received as the apportioned lot which has been assigned to us from the Father of wisdom and mercy. For, behold,

there is a measure in the hand of the Lord, and He grasps the even scales of justice; and whatever is best for each man, even that is meted out to him; and whoever has well fulfilled his task, will be accepted on High, be his worldly state the humblest or the highest, it matters not, provided only that mercy and righteousness have guided his steps, while he performed the pilgrimage of life. So also will retribution seize upon all who have neglected their duty, who wilfully shut out the light that would have shone for them on their path if they had but heeded it; and when they come for their recompense, vainly trusting in the carnal acts of greatness which they have achieved, they will be adjudged to that degradation which their unwilling souls have earned for their disobedience.

Let it be then understood that neither in the past nor in the future can we look with calmness and peace, if we have nothing but earthly greatness and human wisdom for our share. As we have said, the past is always reverted to with mingled feelings of sorrow and pleasure; since there is nothing like unalloyed enjoyment ever experienced on earth. And the future can only open for us a constant succession of sorrows and disappointments, if we have nothing but things of the earth to lean upon for support.— Yet some one may still say, that he knows that to the less wise than himself there may be danger of sorrow, if he deviate from the law, which we have pointed out as the solace of our soul in this earthly life; but that to him, being more greatly endowed, there will be no danger if he even follow his own inclination. To such a one, however, if there be one

among us, let us recall the words of Moses, who says of a similar case:

והיה בשמעו את דברי האלה הזאת והתברך בלבבו לאמר שלום יהיה לי כי בשרירות לבי אלך למען ספות הרוה את הצמאה : דבר׳ כט׳ יח׳ :

"When he heareth the words of this curse, he will bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart, in order that the indulgence of the passions may appease the thirst for them." Deut. xxix. 18.

To which the prophet then adds, "The Lord will not forgive him; but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against this man, and all the curses that are written in this book will rest upon him, and the Lord will blot out his name from under heaven!" This is the warning which we have received; and when has it failed? Whoever of our people, that has braved the wrath, has been consumed in the great fire of purgation, which has ever and anon passed over the earth; and there is a certainty that the same result will always be, whilst the same Power bears rule over the earth and its inhabitants. Whoever is of Israel, is bound by the law of Israel, and whoever is instructed, owes allegiance to the same code which we all have been taught to obey. What matters it to our God that we are better, wiser, or greater than our neighbours? Does this render us less his creatures, his servants, than we otherwise would be? And for what was our distinction bestowed on us, but that we should be more useful, more energetic in goodness than we could be, if less endowed? And should such a motive of thankful-

ness lift us up above the level of mankind, and allow us to be disobedient without the fear of wrath more than our inferior neighbours? Shall additional wealth allow us to work on the Sabbath, when our poor neighbour is in duty bound to rest? Shall our wisdom permit us to despise the word of God, and be gluttons and inebriates, when temperance is enjoined upon the simple man? Shall our beauty be any excuse why we may run riot in all the excesses of our desires, when the deformed would be scoffed for similar wrong doings? Shall our power permit us to dye our hands in a brother's blood, when to every one else human life is sacred? Can we form any reason why the learned in all the sciences may deny his God, and join himself to the worship of the stranger, simply to gain fame and wealth among the enemies of Israel, when such a course would stamp the common man as one derelict in his duty, and an outcast from the household of the blessed seed of Abraham? And whatever other motives of self-congratulation you may discover, they are equally futile as an excuse for sin with those we have just enumerated; and thus, no matter what a man may think of himself, he may be sure of one thing, that there are no valid reasons in existence, which will screen him from the righteous indignation of his justly offended Father. The punishment may be delayed; but we are not to suppose that a case is forgotten, because we do not at once see the recompense following the sin; it is not every flash of lightning which scatters destruction, nor is every act necessarily to be punished in a summary manner. It is the mercy of God which waits for amendments; and should then even death ensue ere

the sin have been atoned for: the power of God is not abridged, and it still can seize its victim in the world of spirits where, at length, all the deeds of life will meet with their ultimate perfection, be this for good or for evil.

Let it also be remembered that the ways of the Lord are perfect; and therefore, there is not, there cannot be, any immunity for sin; and whatever excuses we may frame, let us be convinced that they will be sifted and carefully weighed in the tribunal, where no human error can creep in to mar the decisions of unerring Justice. Let us then lay hold of religion; let us enter upon the narrow path of faith, which will grow broader and fairer as we advance on it; for then only can we look back upon the past without regret; then only can we contemplate the future without apprehension. Hope is the characteristic of the man who knows the Lord; it has consoled him in past adversity, and it illuminates the dark future as a light to his feet. But this consoling treasure must not be looked for in a worldly philosophy, which represents every thing as governed by unavoidable necessity, but in the records of revelation, where we behold God as the Supervisor and Governor of the deeds of man. It is there we behold Him as absolute Goodness, as the Father of all; and if we then feel that we are with our Father, how joyously will we go forward, how gladly will we labour, conscious as we are, that we are guarded and loved, as no mother guards and loves the nursling that sleeps tranquilly on her bosom.

These are a few reflections which naturally spring up at the close of the year; for the man who actually

does feel, cannot, consistently with true wisdom, let day after day mingle itself with the stream of time, without reflecting that each hour he is approaching closer to the end of his earthly career. And we say it without fear of exaggeration, that be we ever so bold and reckless, we must occasionally come to the thought that we are mortal, and fast hastening to our native earth, whence we have been taken. We know also that our soul is immortal, and that we have concerns more precious than any blessings which we can possess on this earth. Is it not then natural, that we should cast our thoughts to that which is so important, and inquire what we ought to do to be saved? It is; and as there is salvation provided for all men, as God has revealed himself alike to all Israel in the law which we have received: let us search in the Word, and let us endeavour to be faithful to our duty, unwavering in our hope, that we may be received in favour as servants who have done the will of their Master, as children who have trusted on to the last. And well will it be for us, if we improve properly the commencement of the year which is so soon to be with us, with its blessings and its trials; happy will we be if we have purged ourselves of transgression, and learned a lesson from the past; and glorious will be our lot, if on the day of trial the Lord will not impute iniquity to us, and find no deceit in our spirit.—And may then the Lord have mercy on us all, and inscribe us in the book of life and happiness, and decree our portion with the righteous who have done his will. Amen.

Elul 22d. } 5604.
Sept. 6th. }

DISCOURSE XX.

ON ATONEMENT AND ACCEPTANCE.

O Father of Mercy! spared by thy benevolence, we are again permitted to enter thy courts, and another year has commenced unto us, that we may again be witnesses of thy truth and glory which fill the world. Yet have we often sinned in thy presence, and done the evil in thy sight, rebelling against thy will, unmindful of thy holy commands. And now we come before thy presence, asking of Thee forgiveness, pardon, and atonement; we crave the suspension of thy wrath and of thy indignation which we have incurred by our sinful deeds. Yet what excuse can we offer to thy omniscience? Can we allege aught that will avail as a justification in thy tribunal? Alas! we have known thy ways, and have wilfully departed from them; we have been taught thy precepts, but our souls have refused to be obedient to their behest. And the record of our transgressions testifies against us, and our iniquity is before our eyes no less than it is known to Thee, to whom all the deeds of man are laid open. Yet, O Father and King! do not cast us off because of our sins, do not forsake thy rebellious children, but forgive according to thy great mercy, as Thou hast borne with our people from Egypt even until now. And let the world be taught that thy faith is yet entire with the sons of thy servants; and let these be made conscious, how great is thy good-

ness with which Thou watchest over them. Let us also feel the working of thy spirit, that many may be cleansed from iniquity and become repentant seekers of thy goodness, that through them those who are now obdurate may be led to fall down and worship, and to abominate the evil of their ways which is now the idol of their hearts. And through this shall we know that thy presence dwells indeed among us, when we see righteousness spread, and mercy prevail all around us; when many come to pray to whom thy worship is now a stranger; when those fear Thee who now follow the path of sin. And let thus the coming Day of Atonement be to us a season of thy renewed love, and be an earnest to us that our spirits have been purified in thy judgment, and that we all have been numbered among those to whom Thou imputest no iniquity, whose transgressions Thou hast forgiven. Amen!

Brethren!

Much had Israel sinned, when the decree of destruction and banishment went forth against them, and the land, which was fertile and smiling in beauty, was to be stripped of its fertility and rendered desolate to the eyes of all beholders because of the sins of its inhabitants. The men were doomed to wander forth, and the women were decreed to wear the chains of slavery instead of the ornaments of gold and jewels which were wont to decorate their beautiful limbs; all because the law of the Lord had been neglected, and because the warnings of the pious seërs, who had been sent to admonish their brothers, had not been listened to, in the manner becoming messages from

the Lord of spirits. Still, amidst all the dreadful denunciations which in those evil days of transgression fell from prophetic lips, there are interspersed words of consolation which, even at this distant day, fall upon the believing ear like the dewdrops upon the thirsting flower in the calm stillness of the summer night. You know of Jeremiah, brethren; he was the man who more than all others was the messenger of woe and destruction; still even he has consolation in his messages, and speaks of happy changes which are impending, whenever the men of Judah return from their transgression. He knew the dread decree, at that day irrevocable, that Jerusalem must fall,—fall under the irresistible blows of the conquering nations that went to battle under the great Nebuchadnezzar's lead; fall, because the measure of her iniquity was nearly full to overflowing; but he too saw glorious gleams of light breaking forth athwart the gloom of the impending night, and he beheld Jerusalem redeemed, Zion restored, although under his very eye the men of Chaldea were battering down the lofty walls, and overthrowing fort and tower, and entering the sanctuary with fire and sword, slaying the men without remorse, and the women without pity; dashing, in their fury, the suckling against the rock, and making the tearful mother the sport for their insatiable swords. And still Jeremiah beheld, through all this sorrow, a glorious future, a future cloudless as the summer sky in his own lovely Palestine, glorious as the brilliant moon when she rises in splendour above the quiet sleeping landscape, in the midst of the glittering array of the stars of heaven. Ay, it was the returning light of the countenance of

the Lord which dawned upon his far-reaching vision; but it was a light to be purchased by the people themselves; for they, who had forfeited the favour of the Most High, were themselves to repurchase it by a change of conduct, by a return to obedience. It was this double change, the wickedness of Israel into righteousness, and of the divine wrath into mercy and everlasting favour, which stood prominent before Jeremiah's mental eye, and thus he spoke:

שובו בנים שובבים ארפה משובתיכם הננו אתנו לך
כי אתה אלהינו : ירמ' ג' כב' :

"O return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings! Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art our God." Jere. iii. 22.

The verse just quoted is composed of two parts, namely, the address of the Holy Spirit admonishing the people to repent, and their reply to the mission of mercy. "O return, ye backsliding children, I will heal your backslidings;" this means, "however often and grievously you may have offended, however laden with guilt may be your spirit, however far you may have strayed from the righteous way: come nevertheless freely to the fold of your Father; I am ready to receive you; and if your transgressions have been manifold, I am able to forgive them all, to wipe out all your iniquity from the book of memorial." In this blessed message we have the entire scheme of repentance unfolded clearly and unequivocally to our admiration, and we behold God the same merciful Being to sinners, which He is to those who have never sinned. Were it that no remedy existed for transgressors, that

every sin demanded the absolute condemnation of the offender: how lost would be the whole human family, how utterly hopeless all longing for salvation, which fills the heart of man! "There is no man on earth so righteous who doth act well, that he sinneth not;" where then would be those in whom the Lord detects no guilt? where those which could escape from the torments which are the portion of those who have forgot their God? There would be but one step to despair and utter recklessness on the one side; "We are lost beyond redemption for the smallest evil we have committed" would be the desperate reflection of those who have fallen; "it is useless for us to look back with regret upon what is past; let us then pluck the roses whilst they bloom, let us dash heedlessly into the whirlpool of dissipation to drown sorrow in the brimming wine-cup, for fear lest the evil hour should reach us before we have tasted our fill;" and on the other, gloomy despondency would follow upon the smallest deviation from right, and the sinner would, in anticipation of the fatal doom that is impending, pass his days in dread of the certain and coming evil. Would this be mercy? could for this end life and reason have been given? And still there can be no line drawn which would separate the consequence of one transgression from that of another. All sinning is a departure from the will of God; every wilful transgression is a rejection of the divine guidance which we have received; consequently, if there were no remedy for sin, every deviation would amount to a forfeiture of mercy, would consign us to destruction, without the possibility of a recovery. They, who know how good the Lord is, will at once recog-

nize the incompatibility of such views with the mercy discoverable in all creation, with the paternal kindness which beams forth from every page of the written word of God. But not such is the spirit of the religion we have received; it breathes forth judgments and retributions; it tells us of a Judge and an Avenger; but it also speaks of mercy and indulgence, of a Father and Saviour. There is judgment for all acts of man, there is retribution for every deed; there is a Judge who sees all that is done; there is an Avenger who metes out the merited doom to those who refuse mercy; but there is mercy even to the sinner, there is indulgence granted that retribution follow not immediately on transgression; there is our Father who waiteth patiently to see whether his children will not listen to his call and come again to his embrace, and there is a Saviour, even our God and Creator who, though both Judge and Avenger, will readily forgive all, even the long obdurate, if they will only claim his mercy, which is extended to all, from the beginning of all things even unto this day. Let us be fully impressed with this consoling idea, when we discover that our way has been the road of perdition,—that the same Being who punishes, rewards us also, that the same God forgives who is wrathful to sinners, and that we have received the means and choice to obtain either reward or punishment; that we are free to act, and when regretting what has passed, free to come back to the place from which we started, and that there is no insurmountable obstacle opposed to us from any external source, why we could not be as good as we desire to be, as good as any of those whom we consider pious and good.

"Return, ye backsliding children!" is the exclamation of the Lord, unto Israel as a nation, unto Israelites as individuals. All are included in the duties which we owe to God, and all are to be comforted with the promise, "I will heal your backslidings." As a people have we sinned, and as a people should we return; ever since the time we went forth from Egypt, have we striven against the Holy Spirit which guided us; we would not submit to the laws which were laid before us, and we wandered away upon the path of error, till we have become scattered among the gentiles. And deep have been the wounds which our apostacy has caused us! Go to the East, you find Jacob's obdurate sons in dread of the tyrant who makes bitter their life; look to the West, they there too are found a byword to the nations among whom they live; "sinning Israelites" is their name, because they have forsaken the covenant; in the ice-covered countries of the North they too are found, loaded with the same contumely which they meet with in the land once their own; and far in the regions of the South, you will encounter descendants of the same ancestry bearing their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers. This has happened because the common parents of this people in the days of their prosperity went astray from the law, and withdrew themselves from the service of the Lord; and He permitted the wounds, which the offended religion demanded, to be struck by the gentiles who trod down Judah's glory as the wild beasts tread down the produce of the vineyard; and to this day the bruises are not healed, because not yet has Israel returned from the dominion of transgression. Still our wounds are not incur-

able; for the great Physician has promised, "I will heal their backsliding;" and this hope sustains us amidst all our calamities, calamities which our sins have justly merited, and which will impel us at length to seek for healing from the hands of Him, who has power to bind up our sores and to staunch the bleeding wounds. Indeed, in the Lord is Israel's salvation; and whenever we seek it as one man, whenever we claim it as a union of brothers, the remedy will not be withheld, and the ransomed of the Lord will return from the lands of their captivity, and dwell in the places which are now waste and desolate, as in the days of old, under shepherds whom the Lord will raise up, under teachers who will truly instruct the people in the ways of the Everlasting Lord.

To the individual Israelites, too, the call is addressed, "Return, ye backsliding children." So soon as you have become conscious that your course of life is not in consonance with the line of duty marked out for you in the law; so soon as your conscience is awakened to compare your own deeds, the result of your own counsels, with the revealed word of God; so soon as your brothers tell you to beware of the consequences of your conduct; so soon as you find that sin has a dwelling-place in your heart: you should pause on your way, and return to the path which the Lord has marked out for you, fearlessly, prayerfully, confident of being received in favour. O say not, erring brother, "My backslidings are many, how shall I return? what merits have I to plead in extenuation of my guilt? who is to defend me before my offended Judge?" Never fear; come only with confidence, with prayer, with humility, and thy Father will be

ready with his mercy to shield thee from the consequences of thy own deeds; seek for no merit, neither in thyself nor in any other being, when thou comest to pray; thy own sense of degradation and self-abasement for having no righteousness in thy possession, will be sufficient to make thy God listen to thy prayer; and thy humility when thou comest to kneel before the Lord, because thou FEELEST thyself sinful, will be all-sufficient to plead before the dread Judge in the hour when He comes to winnow the chaff from the wheat, to purge mankind from those who pollute the world by the iniquity of their deeds. Only consider, brethren! that to us there has never been revealed any other idea than individual responsibility and the unbought mercy of God; on the one side we are told, "The soul that sinneth shall die;" since the father is not to suffer for the sins of the son, nor the son for the sins of the father; and on the other hand we are told, "For the Lord thy God is a merciful God," and "He being merciful forgiveth iniquity and will not destroy, and poureth not forth all his wrath." The evident meaning of these verses is, that whatever evil man does will fall upon him only; there can be no transfer of responsibility on the one side, nor any assumption of guilt on the other. I am not to suffer for the wrong of any other man, nor can the highest being take upon himself my punishment to free me from iniquity. God does not punish merely to punish, which would evidently be the case if needs some one would be compelled to be punished for any sin, before it can be atoned for. God recompenses evil with retribution, either for reformation of the offender, or the improvement of others: yea, we may assert at once,

for both objects combined. Now assume that one who is guiltless should bear the consequences of another's iniquity: how is such proceeding to amend the criminal, or influence to good those who witness the punishment? Evidently as a means of amendment, the party suffering being innocent, it would fail of effecting the least, and as an example to others it could to a certainty not operate; since the only idea which can reconcile us to see punishment inflicted is, that we honestly believe that the sufferer has deserved his fate. So then, it is the Bible doctrine, that the soul that sinneth alone shall die; but not absolutely without retrieve, without remedy; for the Lord is not inexorable, He is ready to pardon if we but come forward to claim his mercy; for He will forgive us when we seek Him with all our heart, and with all our soul—that is, if we abhor our conduct, and endeavour to regain his favour by a newly-awakened devotion to his worship, by a faithful conformity to his holy will. In other words, the state of sin is one of death; the way of repentance is the return to life, life in the presence of the Lord, whose are the souls of the living and the dead.

There is a remarkable degree of expressiveness in the idea, "Return, ye backsliding children;" the sinner is not beyond the call of the voice of Heaven; nothing that he does places him beyond the pale of divine cognizance, of the Creator's watchfulness; and wherever he may place himself, there is constantly breathed in his ear, in the social hours of night, in the pleasant converse of the evening, in the daily time of labour, whether alone in the solitude of the student's chamber, on the bed of sickness, or amidst

the brilliant throng who surround the monarch on his throne—be he the great or the humble—every where he hears the whispering of Goodness reverberating in his heart, "Return, return."—"Come back, erring child," says the Spirit; "Come back to the Father's embrace," says the invisible Guardian: and will we hear? will we follow? Alas! how loving is our God, how forgiving is our Father! but we are obdurate, we feel not that we have offended, that the fruits of our transgression are ripening to our sorrow! O! that we would but once listen; how speedily would we then follow the guidance of the Lord, which has never yet failed, how glorious would be our end, when now we are hurrying on to destruction! And then, the Lord calls us his children, his children, though we have been backsliders! and do we not feel sorrowful at the thought that so much love has been almost wasted upon us ingrates? that blessings, that indulgence, have failed to rivet the bond which in youth bound us to our Father? that we left the road which as children we were taught to travel, though now our reason is enlightened, and the labours of our hands have been blessed with an ample increase beyond our expectations? beyond our deserts? But so is man; forgetful of his God, he lives as though he were independent of all beyond himself, trusting in his strength, confident in his own wisdom. Yet let him beware; sunshine lasts not for ever, security does not endure for many days; the hours of trial will approach, despite of his unwillingness to acknowledge the power of the Supreme Disposer of events; and as an Israelite we tell him, that his religion claims him as a servant of God, and that as such he is bound to seek the forgive-

ness of his Father in heaven, by the very means through which Abraham found favour, by faith and obedience; and that through these means he will be accepted, though his deeds have been formerly in opposition to his duty. For we have received the amplest assurance, that we will be forgiven, if we alter our wicked course, and return to the path from which we swerved; for our Father is there, even at the diverging roads of life, to take back to his fold whoever repents and returns from transgression in Jacob, as He has promised us through his servants the prophets.

Having thus analyzed the first part of our text, we must elucidate rapidly the other portion, which is: "Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art our God." Whoever has studied the history of our people must have observed that much as we have sinned, often as we have been given to idolatry, many as have been our apostacies, even to this day, it cannot be said that we have ever renounced entirely the worship of the Most High. Through all the awful scenes which were witnessed in Palestine during the first and second temples, amidst the horrors of Nebuchadnezzar's sieges and Titus's slaughters; during all the butcheries of Hadrian and the massacres of the Crusaders; when thousands upon thousands perished with famine and exhaustion in their banishment from Spain and our expulsion from other lands of civilized barbarians, the name of the Lord, ONE was the venerated object for whose salvation we yearned in our inmost heart. Had our deeds only equalled our faith, had the belief which we ever felt only influenced us to remain obedient to the every will of God: what a

happy commonwealth would we have formed, how beautifully would we have stood before the world in spiritual no less than temporal excellence as the kingdom of priests for which we were destined! But, we must confess to our shame, that we refused to listen, and the evil, which we yet endure, came upon us in all its overwhelming horrors and fury, and the land of Israel was rendered desolate, and was bereft of its rightful inhabitants. Had we been obedient, our Messiah would long since have come to sit upon the throne of David forever, and to his kingdom there would have been no end; the world would have been redeemed, and we would have been happy as the acknowledged favourites of God, the branch of his planting, the work of his hands through which He is glorified. Nevertheless have we not fallen off altogether; we are smitten, affected with the curse of disobedience, marred in our countenance more than other men; there is neither comeliness nor glory in us that gentiles should desire our society; but with all this we are not placed beyond the reach of redemption, we are children of Israel, recognizable by our descent, by our conduct, by our belief, by the sign of the covenant which we bear in our flesh. Let our sons and daughters leave us, and who sees not the child of Israel marked in their face? Let them swear fealty to another creed, and does not their inward conviction belie the falsehood which they utter with their tongues? Let them put on the emblems which belong to dissenting religions, and how galling do not the very ornaments which deck them rest on their bosom? Yes, we are children of One God; and let us differ in many points of observ-

ance; let us differ upon points of creed; let us be reformers or adherents of ancient usages; let us come from the far East, or the most distant West: the exclamation ADONAY ECHAD is the universal watchword of the whole household of Jacob; in this all join, from this none are excluded. And go where you will, watch the Jew dying on the frozen snow in a rencontre with Russia's armies, or led forth to perish by fire for the sake of his faith in ancient Spain; or follow him in the crowd who worship in the house of God at the close of a Day of Atonement, or even in the social circle where friend meets with friend: every where it is the same sublime thought which animates all; it is the unity of God, the saving power of the Father of all.

Long indeed has our holy religion struggled with the obduracy of our hearts; long has she striven in vain for an absolute victory; but conquered she has never been. She has had to hide her face because of the assault of adverse circumstances which opposed her progress; but she has marched onward, slow indeed, though not less sure of victory. The house of Israel has not yet returned with a firm heart to the Lord, or else it would not have fallen to the lot of the humble individual who addresses you now, to call you to repentance. But to doubt of the ultimate result, of the happy issue of this contest of truth against error, would be to despair of the justice and truth of God. Many may fall off, and leave the fold where Israel is received; but there will always be enough, though they be few, to bear aloft the banner which is to wave as the signal for a regenerated world. —The world will be regenerated, and with the rest

of mankind, Israel will not be lost, the star of Jacob will not set for ever, to be blotted out from under the heaven. But without repentance neither can our nation nor individuals be accepted; it is, therefore, but reasonable to conclude that at a time sooner or later, but a time sure to arrive, the houses of Israel and of Judah will unite to call as one man on the Lord their God, and that then his wrath will be turned aside, and He will have mercy on his land and his people. It will be at that day that the call of the Spirit, "Return, ye backsliding children," will be answered by the repentant voice of the newly-redeemed nation, "Behold we come unto Thee, for Thou art our God." Long since we have heard the call which thy mercy addressed to us, long we have refused to hear, long we have loved our idols better than Thee, long we have preferred following the inclination of our hearts to obeying thy law. But now we feel the unworthiness of our conduct, we are ashamed of our backsliding, and we are here, come back to thy embrace, for Thou art as ever our God. And let history be witness, let thy own wisdom testify, whether we have ever been totally lost to thy worship; and we are again in thy presence to follow thy guidance as on the day when we went out from Egypt; for then Thou wert alone, "no stranger god was with Thee," and now again Thou alone hast redeemed us, unaided by any other power, from the grasp of sin, from the tyranny of cruel oppressions.

This is the idea which Jeremiah held out in the darkest days, when foolish idolatry was the practice of the men and women of Israel. Then their power was broken, and they felt the truth of the word of

God. Changes innumerable have since passed over Israel; and still the name of the Lord is the tower of strength to which we cling in all our sorrows. Is it not then a holy consolation which we justly experience amidst all our trials? a confidence which cannot be shaken, that nothing can destroy the structure of our faith?—And this noble thought should then urge every sinner to come forward and purify himself according to the law of God, to forsake the iniquity in his hands, and to render his soul free from the taint of deadly sin; seeing that for thousands of years the religion of Israel has proved its efficacy, knowing that the God who proclaimed it is sure to punish those who neglect its precepts.—Let us, brethren, feel the full force of this consideration, let us all, who have experienced the woful weight of transgression, come to the foot of the throne of Mercy to ask for healing, for that balm which has never yet failed of restoring the health which had been destroyed by indulgence in transgression and sin. And how goodly will it be when the Lord, at our appearing in his presence, grants us his approbation, and says mercifully, "I will heal your backsliding." O! such a moment of bliss far outweighs all joys of existence, and such a lot can only be accorded to those who, having once sinned, though grievously, have sincerely repented of every sin they have committed. Sinless none of us can claim to be, but repentant all can become; the door is open wide to all who may wish to enter, and the Hand is stretched forth to draw up from the depth of the pool of iniquity all who desire to be washed by the water of purification. This is the spirit of godliness which is never exhausted; it

flows forever, even from the first hour of the creation till the consummation of every thing. It is ours, if we claim it; it is for all men who desire it. Let it then be our endeavour to profit by the approaching Day of Atonement, to let it make a deep and lasting impression on the minds of all: that we may leave the house of God purified and improved, better men, better Israelites, better servants of the Lord than when we entered to pray. So that, be our days cut short in the bloom of youth, or prolonged to a green old age, we may be fit for the kingdom of Heaven, to dwell joyfully among the saints, till the day of the resurrection, when all that is mortal will become endued with everlasting life, when death shall be swallowed up forever, and no tear of sorrow bedew any more the cheek of the sons of man. Amen.

Tishry 7th.
Septem. 20th. } 5605.

DISCOURSE XXI.

THE OBJECT OF THE CREATION.

O God of our fathers! how exalted is thy glory in all the earth! From the first moment that thy creative word went forth to build and to establish, every thing spoke of thy goodness and greatness, and with the increase of years, with the progress of all things to their ultimate consummation nothing is diminished of thy power and mercy, and Thou art the same as at the time Thou didst sit on the throne, when the waters of the flood passed over the sinful generation

that had incurred thy displeasure. All the earth proclaims thy kingdom, and from the rising of the sun to the setting thereof is thy name great among the nations. But above all have we received thy light and thy guidance, that we might proclaim thy name and the august majesty of thy kingdom; and thus are thy people Israel blessed above all tongues and nations; since theirs is the blessed privilege of calling on thy name alone, and to worship no other God besides Thee. Do Thou therefore, O Father! establish firmly the work which thy hands have founded, and prosper our endeavours to spread thy kingdom, and show unto the gentiles that it is indeed thy wisdom and thy word which dwell imperishably among us. So that we may be strengthened and comforted, and live to receive the blessings which Thou hast treasured up for thy servants; and that through us thy glory may be diffused and thy memorial hallowed on earth as it is in heaven, amidst the assemblies of thy spotless messengers who surround thy throne in purity and love, even now and forever. Amen.

Brethren!

Among the maxims which our wise men have handed down to us as the fruits of their research in the law of God, we find the following at the conclusion of the sixth and last chapter of the Proverbs of the Fathers:

כל מה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא בעולמו לא בראו
אלא לכבודו שנאמר כל הנקרא בשמי ולכבודי
בראתיו יצרתיו אף עשיתיו: אבות ו' ט':

"Whatever the holy One, blessed be He, has created in his world, He has created only for his glory; for it is written (Isa. xliii. 7), Whoever is called by my name and whom I have created for my glory, I have formed, also made him."

Whatever exists is not in this world by chance: this is the doctrine of the teachers of Israel; it is not here merely to be beautiful, great or intelligent for no ulterior object unconnected with itself; but since it stands in a necessary connexion with the Creator as its producer, it of necessity has a relation to Him by which the object of its existence will be fulfilled. A workman may make an instrument and part with it forever; since he cannot be beyond the spot where he happens to be at any one period of time, because the finiteness of his nature limits his presence to one place for the time being. Not so the Fashioner of our frame; He has created and called forth innumerable creatures of a thousand varying forms, of a thousand varying natures; they fill the spaces both in the immeasurable heavens, and on the earth on which we live, and in the waters that are cast around our globe. And still they are not beyond the reach of God, they are near Him, at all times, in every place; for walls shut not out his presence, oceans and deserts do not divide Him; hence none of his works have passed out of his reach, although each one moves and lives, and works in its own peculiar sphere.

Whatever exists was made for the glory of God. It is, however, not selfishness which dictates this limited object of all creation. Were it, that a man should say, that all he did had but one object, and this his own personal aggrandizement, we could with truth call him selfish and contracted; because for the

most part the sole advantage of one is to the manifest injury of the many. If a man becomes distinguished for power, there are many who must submit to his will, whether this submission be founded in reason and consent or not. If a man becomes wealthy, many around him may stand in need of the necessaries of life, whilst he riots in superfluous plenty. If a man attains to renown by his wisdom and learning, he is but too apt to make use of this mental power to impose his views upon those less favoured than himself. It is not well in man therefore to regard himself only as of the first importance in the scale of beings; for thus he will become an injury to his fellow-creatures instead of the blessing which his particular position could easily render him. Far different however is the case with the Creator. His glory can never interfere with our well-being. His power is that which sustains all existence; if therefore we submit ourselves yieldingly to his rule, we only do what prudence would counsel us; for thus we best secure our own happiness, seeing that at all moments of our presence on earth we are within his dominion, where his eye always beholds our deeds, where his power is ever ready to seize us.—God's riches consist of the abundance which decks all nature with splendour and beauty; the smallest insect is supported by his bounty, and the highest angel is there only by his bidding; from his munificence then all is fed, from his wide-spread table all is sustained; none therefore are hungry while in his abode there ruleth plenty, none are sighing because his granaries are filled to overflowing.—And his wisdom is not a means of injury to the weak and foolish. For whatever

knowledge there is springs immediately from his spirit, and the light that illuminates the souls of the sons of man springs from his own essence, which is the brightest and purest that thought can conceive and the imagination reach, in their farthest and most painful search for truth and instruction.

To be therefore created for the glory of God, means nothing else than to be destined to the highest perfection. The Lord is the most perfect, the holiest of all beings; there is no imperfection, no defect in his nature, no obscurity in his ken, no hesitation in his judgment. Whatever glorifies Him must thus partake, no matter in how minute a degree, of his perfection and greatness, and the nearer any one thing approaches to the nature of the Author of all, the more can it administer to his glory: the more will it be capable of obtaining and enjoying the happiness for which its nature has fitted it.

If you therefore turn your view on high, and behold the mighty sun that dazzles the eyes, so that you cannot contemplate his radiant beauty; if you in ecstasy admire the silvery moon as she majestically ascends the pinnacle of the firmament in the silent, eloquent nights of the warm season of the year; if you look up to the blue vault of heaven in a frosty night when the satellite of our earth is hid from view, and behold the thousands of brilliant suns that gleam and sparkle, as though they were the jewels set in the diadem which encircles the throne of our Father and King: what can you feel, if you have a heart alive to the glories of God's worlds that roll around you on all sides, what can you say but that these all tell of a Creator, a Preserver, a Ruler who is wise

good, great and glorious? And how do all these things harmonize! Constellation after constellation rises; and planet after planet pursues its course, and comets speed along athwart the boundless waste in the brilliancy of their array, and the beauty of their apparel: and yet there is a place assigned to each, to all; there is no crowding, no interfering with each other's orbit; but every one of all these travels the path which is peculiarly its own, and all obey the law which the Energy that called them forth prescribed unto them from the beginning.

But if you descend from the contemplation of all these mighty glories as we may aptly call them, and cast your searching eye over the earth on which we are placed, the nether world, as our Rabbins style it, what do you not find to admire? what, to be thankful for?—Here before you is the ocean; for thousands of years it has rolled, and it has heaved; its bosom has been tranquil, and been placid as the face of innocence in its moments of joy; and it has risen in mountain waves, and been covered with foam, and been upturned to its centre when the spirit of the storm rushed along over it in his swift-flying chariot. It has borne the commerce of nations, and the warships of contending empires have ploughed its plains, and vented there their rage in their deadly conflicts against each other. And many are the treasures it has swallowed up when its waves roared, and many are the gallant hearts that sleep in its coral caves till the day of the resurrection; and many a country have its surges overflowed in their inroad upon the land; and thus in many cases it has been a messenger of weal, the agent of woe, as its Creator commanded it to

bless or to punish.—And think well, how mysterious is this power: you know not the causes which agitate it; the reasons why its roarings cease; and together with its equally mysterious companions the winds of heaven, which become cognizable only when they are called into action, and then die away to return no more, it speaks of the glory of Him who cast it around our globe as the belt for the union of distant nations, as the girdle that is to bind all mankind into one bond of brotherhood.

And there are the rivers that flow onward from their source till they meet with ocean's floods to be swallowed up in that common receptacle of the waters beneath the firmament. How small their origin! how insignificant their rise! still as onward they move, how they deepen! how they expand! and the humble rill, that on the mountain height sparkled at your feet like a silver thread, pours a mighty volume in deep ocean's lap, and is at its termination great and wonderful, and offers a refuge to the despairing mariner whose bark has long been tossed upon the sea, and dispenses blessings to many a town, to many a hamlet, that are scattered along its banks. What would the earth be without these rivers! a desert waste, a howling wilderness! But now these are the means to fructify the soil, to enliven the landscape, to facilitate travel, to perform labour for man; and they tell that the great Being who created them is indeed glorious, wise and good, and they admonish you to be thankful that in his mercy He has appointed them to be servants unto you, the ministers of his bounty.

Now turn to the dry land; and here too you will constantly and universally find cause to glorify your

God. If you have examined with the eye of science the objects that are everywhere around you, the animal that bears you gaily along, the flower that blooms in your garden, even the dust on which you tread: you will have discovered in each, in all, evidence of matchless skill, of surpassing wisdom. Few are the elements which enter in the combinations of which every material thing is constituted; but with all there is something too ethereal for human search to define, why and how these few elements should form such a variety, such an infinite succession of substances, all differing, all admirable in their construction. Who but a God that is all-powerful could have contrived these creatures, who but the Lord can be their Creator! Look at the various animals that move on the earth; the birds that flit beneath the sky; the fishes that sport in lakes, rivers, and seas; the insects that dance in the light of the sun, or buzz on the face of the waters; the reptiles that glide along in the brilliancy of colour; the worms that crawl in the dust: and who does not find each adapted to the sphere for which it is destined? The humble silk-worm that weaves its own sepulchre is admirable, wonderful, surprisingly gifted with its peculiar instinct; and humble as is its lot, short as is its life, it is built with the same matchless skill which gives strength to the eagle's wings, and points out his way beyond the region of the clouds.—Nothing which you survey, nothing which you contemplate, but must preach to you of the greatness and glory of God, and call on you to fall down and worship the great Mercy that has subjected all these things to your service, and made you the lord of all that is placed on the earth.

And your body, the house in which your soul lives, proclaims the glory of God! They who have carefully studied our structure, and have as it were looked into man himself to teach them how to adore their Maker, have proved that for variety, for strength, for use, for beauty, nothing could have been contrived by human ingenuity, granting even that man could have formed a creature like himself, half so admirable as the outward frame of the human race. The hand that performs so many acts, that opens and shuts, expands and closes at the merest wish, how well is it calculated to perform the infinity of labours which it momentarily executes! What animal has a hand like man?—what being is skilled in the use of instruments as is man, the favourite of God's creation? And there is the tongue, the organ of speech, by which soul is opened to soul! how well does it execute the object for which it was made. The heart desires, the soul frames the thought, and incontinently the tongue becomes the messenger of what dwells within the recesses of the spirit, and other hearts desire, other souls frame thoughts, all urged by the power of speech of the first who conceived and thought. Within our soul burns the law of God with a brightness, a living power, which fill up her whole being. And she arrays her emotions in the outward garment of intelligible sounds, and steps abroad with what she is imbued, and enkindles in other souls the life and light that are within herself, and revives and refreshes many that otherwise would have languished and died. O truly is our frame a tabernacle of the Lord, a fit temple for his glory; and in thinking on yourselves therefore, in pondering over your own being you must

acknowledge that you were, as outward men, created for the glorification of your Maker, as a part of the creation that constantly and silently hymns his praise.

But glorious as is outward creation in its manifold varieties, more glorious far is the creation of the word of God which has been bestowed on us for our happiness. For, just as the earth would be a desert without the rivers and streams that render it fruitful, so would human life be a waste, a starless sky, a raging ocean, without the revelation of the Lord, which teaches us how to act, how to live, how to hope, how to die. If man teaches, there may be doubts on our mind whether he have fully comprehended the subject, whether there may not be falsehood, whether there may not be some selfish and unworthy motive which lies at the foundation of his instruction. When, however, the Lord comes to teach, we cannot fear of being deceived, we can only listen, and say as the prophet did of old "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." His guidance is a sure protection amidst dangers, his faithfulness a safe refuge amidst the storms of existence; and whatever therefore He tells us, is that which must be the best for us in every position in which we may be placed. And if we examine with such faith the book which He has written, we will always find the glory of God combined with the benefit of mankind; and the punishment of the sinner, the death of the wicked even, an admirable commentary upon the text "for in the image of God, hath He made man;" since, because man has received so high a destiny, his conduct requires to be more fenced in, to use a Jewish expression, to be more circumscribed, than it would need

to be were he to die the death of the beast that perishes away, when its appointed time is over. No, man must be guarded, in order to fit him for immortality; and this guarding he discovers in the wisdom of God which we have in our possession, and in following its directions he will surely and safely arrive at the portals of bliss, which his Father in heaven has appointed for all those who seek his mercy. If we wish to know how we are to love God, we are shown a series of duties by which we can display to our own satisfaction, whether we have sufficient control over our evil inclinations to sacrifice them to the command we have received. If we seek to be informed how to love our fellow-man, we will be told to be directed by that unsurpassed system of ethics, or of moral duties, which is contained in the Bible. It is not a system of mawkish sensibility, which only sees the evil-doer, which only regards with affection and indulgence the violent aggressor on his neighbour's property, and on his brother's life; but it surveys all mankind, and can see peace to the entire mass only in guarding the rights, life, and property of every member of the human family; it therefore punishes the wicked that the others "may hear thereof and be afraid, and do no more like these deeds of wickedness" for which the punishment is awarded. If then a man violently assails the life of another so that he dies, his own life pays the forfeit. If a man steals his fellow-being and sells him for a slave, his own life pays the forfeit. If a man enters the home of his brother and robs him of his dearest treasure, the wife of his bosom, the malefactor's life pays the forfeit. If a man, rebelling against the authority of

the Lord, openly forswears his duty by worshipping idols, thus sapping the foundation, as far as he can do it, of God's own state, his life must pay the forfeit.—And so for minor crimes, minor punishments are ordained; but no offence can pass with impunity. And where the sin is only against Heaven, where the soul only transgresses, as in matters of faith, whilst the body lends not its aid to display the sentiments by outward action, no matter how great the infidelity, how great the inward rebellion, the soul alone becomes answerable to her Maker; no human tribunal can judge of such guilt, no human judgment can be executed upon such a criminal. The sin is a moral one, and moral must be the visitation; it is the Lord, who is the Master of all spirits, and He can and will send due visitation as soon as, and whenever He may deem it requisite to have his name glorified by the prostration of the rebellious worm, the less than a fragment of a potter's vessel, who dares to doubt of his Maker's power, of his Saviour's mercy, of his God's providence.—Well may we say: "The commandment of the Lord is pure, it enlighteneth the eyes;" it is indeed a study for the simple, but also a wonder to the wise; and search through it when young, search through it when old, and it reviveth the spirit, it makes the simple wise; and truly may we therefore say that, great as is the creation, greater far is the revealed word; and it too glorifies the Lord, and speaks of his perfection, and it proves that He has made it for the sake of the holiness of his name, that he might be sanctified among the sons of man. —We could add much more, we could descant for hours on the beauty and sublimity of the theme; but

what need is there to prove what you all know? what all mankind acknowledge if they have but received the proper instruction?—And then I speak to Israelites who, with me, believe in the same law, worship the same God; and they will surely ascribe glory to his name, and love the wisdom of his ordaining, and bless his holy name for having given the law of truth and the life everlasting to his people Israel.

This consideration brings us at once to the subject to which I wished to direct your attention, by applying our text to ourselves as members of the house of Jacob. We too are a creation, a special work of the Lord, that He may be glorified. If by the formation of man as the image of God, by the bestowal of the Bible which is the word of God, the world was greatly benefitted, and the name of the Lord magnified and extolled: He is not the less apparent in his glory by the selection of Israel as his own peculiar treasure. Look on the image of God! how often has he deteriorated from his noble calling; how did he fall in Adam when he ate of the tree of knowledge, though every thing was allowed him, save the fruit of the one tree which was in the midst of the garden; how had he swerved from the path pointed out when the waters of the flood came over the earth, "because she had been filled with violence;" and how wofully was he derelict when, at the building of the tower and city in the land of Shinear, he sought to frustrate the councils of his Maker, to spread the human family over the face of the earth.—And the word of God! how has it been contemned at all times and under all circumstances! In all ages, man has striven against its decrees, as though some dire evil were hidden in

its pages, as though destruction would follow in the path pointed out to us as the one in which we should walk. If then man had been made in the image of God only, and the word had been merely cast abroad without a human guardian to watch over it in its struggles for supremacy over sin and death: mankind would never have become perfected, and the rank offspring of superstition and folly would have overshadowed the purest and best gift of God to his children. You may ask: "Why does sin exist?" This is a question not for us to solve; perhaps God wished to form a creature that should struggle for salvation, that should, not like the angels, who are nothing but purity, and whose beatitude is inherent in their very being, labour with diligence to become exalted and accepted on High. This we do know that, if we have received feelings which excite to sin, we have inherent in us stronger powers than sin, which enable us to struggle successfully, and to overcome the evil, and be obedient in all things. But above all, free choice was imparted to our nature; and hence we are at liberty to refuse the kingdom of Heaven if in our perversity we may choose to do so.—We therefore say, that without a custodian of the Bible, the glorious work of the Lord would have sunk under and beneath the dominion of sin, unless the Lord himself had come to rescue this blissful gift from amidst the destruction.—Now this precisely came to pass.—First, the age of the flood proved by their iniquity that they would not live under the law. Next the age of the Babylonian Tower testified likewise, that they did not value the kingdom of the Lord. In the days of Abraham also, though he preached and

taught the truth, crime had again become prevalent, and Sodom and its sister towns were overwhelmed, because there were not ten righteous men to obtain pardon for their city. And when we look unto Egypt at the time when sixty myriads of Israel's sons were slaves and bondmen in its boundaries, a tyrannical Pharaoh exclaimed, "Who is the Lord!" It was therefore that the Lord willed to "form to himself a people that they might tell his praise," as the prophet Isaiah expresses himself in chapter xliii. 22. False to their God were Noah's generation; false to their God the generation of Babel; false the men of Abraham's age; false the wise rulers of Egypt. But the truth was not to perish, because it was not loved; God's glory was not to be hidden to everlasting, because man loved idols and vanity. The Lord for this reason educated our fathers in the midst of tribulation, that they might know Him as their sole Redeemer, as their only God and Father; as says the same prophet whom we just quoted (Isaiah xlviii. 10): "Behold, I have refined thee, though not unto silver, I have approved thee in the crucible of affliction." And in good truth, they were tried in the iron furnace, even in Egypt, to make them fit to be the recipients of the precious word, and to look forever unto the Lord as their sole Refuge, as their only Saviour in the midst of tribulations. And thus did you arise, O men of Israel! spring up as does the noble plant from the midst of the corruptions of the earth, to blossom in the presence of the nations as the blissful tree which is to ripen the fruit of salvation. And when after your establishment you endeavoured to throw off your allegiance to your King,

the law claimed you back as its own, as its servants, who can only live in God. When many fell off and would have no portion in David, nor inheritance in the son of Jessé, again the sword was unsheathed, and you were rendered few instead of having been as numerous as the stars of heaven. But yet a remnant remained, a remnant glorious as your ancestry, noble as your progenitors. And they stood unflinchingly on the day of battle, and they defied the foe whilst the warm life-blood flowed freely from their deadly wounds; and dying, these blessed men handed the standard to the almost unconscious youth, who had grown up in the midst of these struggles, that they might bear it onward till that time, when it should float triumphant over the walls and ramparts of the newly risen Jerusalem. And you, brethren! are here this day, as the descendants of these undaunted heroes and martyrs, who glorified the Name which angels mention in dread and adoration, and the legacy which they carried away as the only treasure which they saved from the wreck of their empire, is still yours,—yours, if you will bear it in your hearts, if you will treasure it in the inmost recesses of your spirit. —O how the heart of the patriot Hebrew warms, when he looks back upon the long line of nobles in the kingdom of the Lord from whom he has sprung! ay! untitled they were on earth, poverty and affliction were their estate; but they are registered in the book of the righteous before the Lord, and their riches are those which perish not, their treasures are those over which death has no dominion, and their chaplets are those which never fade, the flowers of which are ever fragrant, the green of which is always

bright. And these were your fathers! and such as these were your mothers! What does this all say to you, brothers and sisters of the house of Israel? Does it tell you to live a life of indolence? of self-indulgence? of vanity? of worldly pursuits? Would this be for the glory of the Lord? would this be combining in yourselves the perfection of the divine image, the nature of man, with the perfection of divine wisdom, the word which God has revealed?—No; Israel can only be Israel when they are active in all that is asked of them; active in their earthly calling, for our body too must not be neglected, it is the dwelling of the soul, the image of God; labour therefore cheerfully in the sphere pointed out as the field of your labours, depend on the blessing of God for success, and seek neither gifts nor loans from man, unless dire necessity compels you; but above all, fly to your religion as the chief means of your welfare; labour in it without ceasing, it is the glory of God, it is your own happiness. Know, that all earthly greatness has received an appointed time when it must vanish, pass away, and leave a woful void behind. But our faith—our hopes—our trust—cannot remain unfruitful, they will blossom amidst decay, bear fruit amidst corruption. Seek not therefore to lead a life of pleasure, but submit yourselves, your wishes, your aspirations, your desires, to the faith, the law which you have received from your fathers, for thus only can you be justified, thus only can you be said to labour for the glory of God.—You perhaps feel yourselves drawn away by worldly desires; you see the gentiles around you enjoy what your religion prohibits unto you; you see them labour on the Sabbath

day, and gaining wealth and distinction which you cannot attain. You may therefore feel indifferent to your birthright, and be anxious to throw off the hated name, the hated faith, the contemned hopes of salvation which are yours. But beware! you may do all these things, and still you cannot escape the responsibility which your fathers assumed when at Sinai, they said נעשה ונשמע "We will do and obey." The promise was made amidst the gratitude of overflowing hearts for innumerable benefits received, in the midst of admiration at the greatness of the Lord, displayed to the understanding and knowledge of all. This promise was ratified when your fathers entered the holy land, when Joshua, before he died, again asked them "whom they would serve;" they then again chose the Lord. Again, when Solomon built the temple, the people came in the covenant and rejoiced before the Lord "seven and seven days, even fourteen days."—And when Ezra and Nehemiah restored the state, the covenant was renewed, and from that moment idolatry was banished from among us. And in each generation since then, there have been those who bore testimony to the sacredness of the oath, and to the permanence of the obligations, and though they suffered martyrdom and persecution on earth, they no doubt have been accepted on High as well-tried servants and faithful children. And can we escape the obligation? will there be no retribution, if we fall off? Let him believe this who does not confide in Providence; "but ye who cleave to the Lord your God, who are here alive this day," ye who have ever known that there is no virtue without reward, no sin without retribution: you surely will

fly for protection and safety to the law, and endeavour to avoid sinning against its precepts, if you wish to escape that punishment which ever pursued your fathers when they attempted to follow the ways of the gentiles, and to walk in the ordinances which are not from God.

You, brethren, have been formed for the glory of the Lord; He has, in forming you, combined the image of himself with his word, so that both should exist in the same persons. Israel without the law is an impossibility; without it we should be like the other nations of the earth, with it we are separate and distinct amidst the families of man, though we are but few in each town, "men of number" in all lands. Without us the evidence of the truth of God's law and the certainty of his ultimate sole reign on earth would be entirely obliterated; and still they are facts which are of the utmost importance both to us and other portions of mankind, although these now may not recognize the truth, amidst the din and confusion which the bad passions and the inventions of designing men have raised on earth.—But believing is not all that is required; a nominal Jew is but a useless specimen of the testimony which we are to bear. If you wish to be Jews, bearers of God's standard, be so in full earnestness and sincerity. Make yourselves acquainted with your duties by a careful education and the study of God's word; and when you are instructed, omit no opportunity to prove that the faith which dwells within you is active and full of life and immortality. When the hour of the Sabbath arrives, welcome ye the heavenly bride with joy and holiness, because she has come again to bid the labourer cease

his toil, and to bring rest to the weary spirit. Welcome, yea welcome the day! it is a sign between God and you; on it He will be glorified; it is a part of his creation, it is a rest which springs from Him, and on the resting day of the Lord the sons of Jacob should sanctify the holy Name.—Honour the festivals; they are seasons which remind you of the wonders which were wrought in your behalf, that you might be redeemed from bondage, and your soul be enlightened by the wisdom and will of God.—Live in your own houses in abstinence of all, which the God of your fathers has set aside as unclean, and let all the world see that you have dominion over your animal appetites, and that you can sacrifice them to the blessed principles of your ancestral religion.—But in *faith*, too, be erect! Hope for the welfare of Jerusalem; pray for the coming of the redeemer under whose shadow we shall live in peace among the gentiles.—Honour the Lord alone in your hearts; associate with Him no being in any manner whatever; since He alone is God, since He alone is our Saviour.—Confess this faith aloud, and let not shame of the world withhold you from publicly appearing as professing Jews; and rest assured that even in a worldly point of view you will not lose by a profession and practice under which the pious ones, whose name we have inherited, flourished like the cedars on Lebanon. Even assume that you should lose much in standing and wealth by being Jews: then rise above the perishable world, and seek for true happiness where alone it can be found, in the presence of the Lord who dwells in heaven, and whose reign is unto all eternity.

Israelites! you are God's servants, the heralds of

his glory; you are the perfection of men, your destiny is the perfection of all the hopes which the pious of every age have ever prayed for, of which all the prophets speak. Live so that you may glorify the Lord in the eyes of man, and educate your offspring so that none of your latest descendants may be wanting in the family of Jacob, when the Lord returns to Zion in mercy.—In brief, live in the law and for the law, and cast on God all your wishes, and be sure He will bring to pass whatever tends for your happiness, that is, at last, whatever tends to his glory.—And may our eyes behold the consummation of all things, when all mankind like ourselves will belong to the same flock, to the same household, when the idols shall be no more, and God be glorified alone on earth as He is one alone in heaven; on that day when the earth shall be full of knowledge of the Lord, and He shall be the God one and his name be One. Amen.

Heshvan 5th.
October 18th. } 5605.

NOTE.—This address was written in New York, and spoken at the Synagogue Shearith Israel, on Sabbath Noah 5605.

DISCOURSE XXII.

SENTIMENT AND PRACTICE.

O OUR GOD! Thou art the same from the beginning even to the end of time, and ages that have passed have beheld in Thee the same goodness which we this day witness; and those ages which are to follow will find no change in Thee, in thy truth, and in thy mercy. O how hast Thou upheld Jacob! from the birth of thy servant Thou didst watch over him that he sunk not before the power of his violent brother: and from the first wandering of his sons unto the present hour Thou hast guarded them that they fell not before the violence and hatred of a hostile world. Could we have arisen to bless thy name without thy special providence? could we have stood undestroyed without thy gracious guidance? O well do we know this, and thereat is our soul rejoiced, that at all times we are thy special witnesses, whom Thou wilt not forsake though fiercely howls the storm of persecution, and though great are the backslidings of our sinners. But bless us now, O Father! whose are all the blessings which gladden the world; bless us with the blessing of thy providential care, with the light of thy countenance, with the mercy of peace, that thy grace may abound in our midst, and produce fruits of righteousness, the scent whereof shall be like Lebanon's fragrance, and the roots of which shall be immovable even as the cedars which stand unshaken

amidst the roaring of the hurricane which scatters desolation in its path. And let us be glad in thy salvation, and be our God as Thou hast promised, even for the merit of thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and for the sake of thy holy Name, which is mighty and fearful. Amen.

Brethren!

We often boast that we are duly imbued with religious sentiments, whatever else our conduct may betoken; we fancy that we love God in our heart, though our outward acts contradict our own self-congratulations; and when we are under the influence of such sentiments, we are very unwilling to listen to correction, and even imagine those who act more and speak less as far beneath us in piety and genuine devotion. Every person almost sets up a standard of righteousness by which he measures himself; and whilst one attaches all importance to acts, another does the same to sentiments. We have thus formalists and sentimentalists, who each in turn look upon the others as deficient in godliness, simply because these do not come up to their own imaginary standard, which they have arbitrarily set up as their own proper rule of conduct. But it is nowise difficult to ascertain that sentiment is only the foundation, not the perfection, of religion, and that acts may be the mere effects of education and practice without exciting the least permanent emotion in the heart. As little as mere devotion without morality is religion, can form without love of God be dignified by this title; on the other hand mere morality is not religion, is not at least Jewish religion; nor can a merely professed love of

God be looked upon as meritorious without it is displayed in some sacrifices, which the man who really loves God is willing to make in his service. It must therefore be evident to us, if we think at all, that there must be some error in the various assumptions of exclusive piety, whilst persons so materially differing in speech and acts all claim to be possessed of the genuine measure of godliness; since it must force itself on our conviction that, if the one praises sentiments exclusively, whilst the other neglects them altogether, both cannot be correct in their diverging appreciation of what constitutes religion. Hence a duty arises to us to investigate in what real religion does consist, that we on the one side may be able to judge with knowledge of the merits of the different claimants, and on the other to acquire for ourselves the true standard after we have discovered where we can obtain it.

Let us investigate: Why do we act? what induces us to practise any line of conduct? Either it is something to our advantage which incites us, or it is that we wish to oblige a friend or one to whom we are indebted, or it is that we have cause to fear some one more powerful than ourselves whom our acting otherwise might induce to do us some indefinite injury. Even those acts which apparently are to our disadvantage, for instance charity and personal benevolence, are no exceptions to this position; since by giving we gratify our feeling of benevolence, which would cause us pain and uneasiness if we were to pass by those whom we could readily aid without bestowing some assistance on them; it is therefore a species of reward which we experience at the moment we serve others

which impels us to be kind and serviceable to our fellow-beings. No man however will do anything which he believes to be to his manifest injury, or from which he does not expect to reap a greater benefit than the sacrifice he makes. If a man, therefore, is presented with a religious duty, and is told that he is bound to observe it, there must be some inducement presented to him at the same time, why he should act accordingly, or else he will to a surety refuse acquiescence. For he might say: "What am I to gain thereby? who has any claims upon my compliance that I should yield obedience? who is there who could injure me if I pretermit this act which is demanded of me?" You will see, brethren, that he requires one of the elements which prompt conduct before he can act; for no one in his sound senses will comply with any demand without having some weighty motives for so doing, especially if the act be not merely for the moment, but would have to be repeated for a period longer or shorter, according as his days may be prolonged or not.—In other words, there must be a sentiment, or rather a series of sentiments which alone can induce a man to act. Suppose he were for the first time to be told of the duty, to observe, for instance, the weekly Sabbath: you would be compelled to show him either that it would be to his own advantage, or that he would oblige some one who has claims upon him, or at last that he might suffer from the resentment of a superior Being in case he were disobedient. Difficult as it might be to infuse such a sentiment in a grown-up person who had never known of such a duty, it is nevertheless easily possible to imbue the mind of a child with it to such an extent that

he in after-years will feel it as a part of his being, which he cannot throw off without doing a species of violence to his very nature. Still it must be based upon some tangible motive, or else he will be apt to let secondary considerations afterwards prevail to induce him to commit this very violence, and to adopt a new line of conduct more consonant with his apparent interests.

Now, it is requisite to impress on the mind, in order to produce a compliance with the religious duty which we have described, that it is of the utmost importance to man himself to be religious; first, because he is the absolute gainer thereby; secondly, because the Being who demands compliance has claims upon his gratitude; and thirdly, because this same Being has the power to make him feel the weight of his displeasure if he refuses obedience. In other words, man must be convinced that religion is a blessing to him, and the reverse an injury and a detriment in every sphere wherein he may be placed. The sentiment therefore which is the foundation of duty is composed of a threefold element: personal interest, gratitude, and fear; or in other words, self-love, love of God, and fear of God. If I now am fully convinced in my mind that the virtues which our religion prescribes are the very essence of my happiness: I have the most powerful motive of self-interest to practise them, even if they apparently demand a sacrifice of my time, means, and personal exertions. If this should not be enough to urge me on, perhaps the love I feel for my great Benefactor, who is to me Father, Guide, Life, and God, may impel me to endeavour to do something by which I can show to my own self that this feeling is

something more than a mere empty sound, that it is a sentiment which produces action as well as words. And if this, too, should fail to influence me, I may perhaps be induced to obedience by the consideration, that I am exposing myself constantly to retribution for neglecting what I have been taught as my duty; inasmuch as God, who is so beneficent in all his acts, is also ready to mete out punishment if his mercy is not heeded and his will is contemned.

Now, there may be many who observe religion, because they have been accustomed to do so from their infancy, they do as their fathers have done, and reflect, however, very little upon their course of life, whether it be the offspring of reason or otherwise. They have grown up with the idea that certain acts, ceremonial and social, are necessary; they have so seen it done by their parents; and whilst no other motive is presented to them, they find it easier to conform than to transgress. But remove them from their associates, and place them among those who scoff at Judaism, who worship their own inclinations and make an idol of the gold for which they labour: and it is no rare occurrence to see such strict conformists fall off by degrees, and contradict their former deeds by a new course of conduct. Is it that their religion is of less value in itself than it was hitherto?—No—it is because they have never felt its importance, and they throw it off, because they do not feel its value now. They were formalists, and no sentiment mingled with their outward devotion; their soul was void, whilst their hands mechanically acted the part which had always been assigned to them.

No one who is a friend to our religion will there-

fore teach that we should not above all endeavour to impress a strong sentiment of devotion on the mind of our children; for this is the very stay which is to support them in their struggle with sensual life, which they must wage fiercely and unyieldingly from the moment they have thrown off the leading-strings of infantile years. It is the battle-axe which they must wield, when temptation comes to meet them with the allurements of pleasure or the hopes of gain. It is the shield which alone can ward off the javelins which are hurled against their peace by the enemies of their race and their religion. But to assert that the sentiment of devotion is all which is required, would be saying that it were enough if the tree would produce leaves and blossoms in abundance, while not a single fruit should come to maturity. O beautiful indeed is faith! it is like the flowers which enrich the landscape in the spring-time of year; it is like them lovely to the eye, fragrant to the smell; it refreshes the spirit, it appeals with its loveliness to the feeling soul. But if it remain fruitless, if the summer come and there be no young fruits on the tree of life, if the autumn come and there be nothing to be gathered from the naked branches: what is its use? what has it availed in the scale of righteousness? There may have been the green leaves of lip-service, there may have been the fragrant flowers of heartfelt devotion; but there are wanting the seed-bearing products which are to propagate the tree from which they sprung, which are to reproduce the stem after itself shall have fallen before the blast, and been consumed by the fire of destruction. The human eye becomes wearied of beauty; but the human soul is never wea-

ried of enjoying what is, in truth, good and lovely. Faith, therefore, without acts is the death of the spirit, it lulls it into security, causing it to imagine an excellence which does not exist; it is a fading flower, an exhaled odour; but faith followed by action is a devotion displayed in permanent deeds; it is ever fresh, ever fragrant; and as one act passes away by its accomplishment, another will be ready to take its place; and then each in its turn will leave a purifying effect on the soul, and add life to mortality, imperishable existence to the days of man that fleet away and then are felt no more. Words are mere sounds, professions are mere aspirations, which may or not indicate that the heart is true; but where actions accompany the earnest word, where the lips not alone speak of charity but where the hand too is ready to assist: there indeed dwells the fount of life, there the spirit of truth has taken up its blessed abode.

But how easy is the worship of the lips! how easy is it to say "I love God," whilst the deeds that are to betoken this love are wanting! How comforting is it to the sluggard to fancy himself in the way of godliness, whilst he does nothing to prove himself worthy of the name of God's servant.—It is therefore to such as these that the prophet exclaims (Malachi i. 6):

בן יכבד אב ועבד אדניו ואם אב אני איה כבודי
ואם אדונים אני איה מוראי אמר ה׳ צבאות לכם
הכהנים בוזי שמי ואמרתם במה בזינו את שמך :

מלאכי א׳ ו׳ :

"The son honoureth the father, and the servant his master; if then I am a father, where is my honour? and if I am a master,

where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests! who despise my name; and ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?"

We profess to be the children of God, who is our Creator, our Father; we profess to fear the Lord, who is our King and Ruler. But where are the deeds that are to represent these sentiments? And still we say inquiringly, In what have we been deficient? do we not love God with all our heart? are we not deeply imbued with his unity, his greatness? do we not value ourselves, chiefly, for being children of the covenant? descendants from Abraham? do we not regularly attend public worship? are we not present at all assemblies? And so to the end of the catalogue of pleasant virtues, we have a great deal to congratulate ourselves about, we are wonderfully good in all these things; but alas! all of these are mere pleasant exercises, they impose no burden upon our inclinations, and they are an easy method of being pious. Still is it indeed by these means that we honour God? asks He only of us that we should feel inward love? have inward faith? is with this our duty discharged? Only let us look at the law and see what this teaches in respect to duty, and then let us answer candidly whether or not we have despised his Name. He is indeed the universal Father, and as such He has taught us, his children, how we should live in our houses, how we should be in the field, how we should act in the city. But we pretend to know every thing better than the Bible. Are we told that it is wrong to pollute ourselves with the food of gentiles: we querulously demand, "Why shall we not eat?" or we say, "Let those abstain whose conscience bids them to do so, we feel

ourselves absolved, we do not believe such laws were intended for our enlightened age, they were for ancient times, in the hot climates of Arabia." This is new reasoning! but is it fit for those who really honour their Father? He ordains as plainly as words can do in his holy book, that certain things shall be unclean to the house of Israel, that they should be considered as defiling those whom He had set apart to be his chosen people. If therefore we really feel a filial respect for Him, how can we set up our own judgment above his? and where in his whole law is there any dispensation granted to any age or to any country to abolish or to limit the prohibitions? "Why shall we not eat?" Even because God has prohibited it! He has chosen us as his people, to be the recipients of his religion, to be holy unto Him through the observance of his precepts. And it is not a great thing He has asked of us to maintain our separate existence; He has not asked of us to mar our bodies, or to wear outwardly some peculiar distinctive mark; He has not asked of us to avoid all pleasures or to look upon every enjoyment as sinful; He has not asked of us that we should afflict our bodies by corporeal punishment or by long fasts: none of these acts are prescribed in the law; we should merely be circumspect in our diet, and be careful to eschew all those substances which He has set apart for us as unclean. The reason assigned is, that we should thereby become holy to our God, who is himself holy, and who is our supreme Benefactor; who has conducted us out from amidst the hardships of slavery, that He might be our God. And shall we refuse this little mark of obedience? we who so ardently profess to honour and

to love Him? our lips are burning with reverence for the holy Name, and shall we hesitate whether or not we will pollute ourselves by what He has declared unclean? Is it not enough for us that our Father speaks? and shall we bargain, advance in our obedience, or deduct therefrom as though we were going to purchase some commodity in the public market for the use of our table? We call this honour? love of God? And then we ask, "By what have we dishonoured thy name?" O! for the blindness of sinning man! his standard of love are his own desires, his own pleasures; and whilst the honour to God demands nothing militating against them, he does pay this tribute; but no sooner is he to make them a sacrifice upon God's altar, than he finds that there is no good reason for this or that command; the merciful Father could not desire that he should forego the good things of this world; the Supreme Wisdom could not possibly attach any importance to such trifling acts. But how do we know that this is not actually the case? how do we know what are trifles? The only arbiter to decide these questions is the written Word of God, and therein we are distinctly told that, not alone is it the will of our Father that we should abstain, that we should regulate our appetite in all that He has prohibited unto us, but that we would be unworthy of his holiness which religion is to confer, if we do transgress. Well may, therefore, the prophet say to those who love God with their lips, "If I am a father, where is my honour?" Yes, where is the honour when the child disputes the Father's authority, when the obliged cavils at the demand of the Benefactor; for there can be no love whilst we hesitate to yield ourselves entirely to the

guidance of our God; whilst we sacrifice upon his altar defiled bread; whilst we do not feel within ourselves the urgent call to be priests of holiness in the individual temples of our own bodies, consecrating them to the service of the Lord by love, devotion, piety, and virtuous deeds.

And continues the prophet, "And if I am a master, where is my fear?" meaning, your acts prove that you are not sufficiently alive to divine love to yield obedience from affection; but is that wholesome fear, which you ought to feel for the great Avenger, any more active within you? Let your own conduct prove the contrary. How often have Israelites been defective in obedience! how often have they done the evil by robbing the widow and the orphan, by practising injustice within their gates, by speaking falsely to one another, by following the impulse of evil passions, forgetful that there is an almighty Justice who lets none of these acts pass unnoticed! You have said by your words that you believe yourselves the purchased servants of the Lord; you have acknowledged Him as the Master of the universe; you say there is no god beside Him, that He is One alone in heaven and on earth; but where is the evidence that your professions are sincere? If you really believe all this, if you truly feel that He is your Master who can punish you for all derelictions, prove it by your acts; love justice above all things, not forgetting that your God hates all violence, and will bring to light whatever is wrought in the most secret places; love charity—if any one needs your aid, be you ready to accord it according to the blessing which you yourselves have received; if you see the hungry, feed him;

if your enemy is athirst, give him water to drink; if you see the child of misery go unclad, cover you the nakedness of his limbs, that he may pass on his way rejoicing and bless you before the Lord; if you see the mourner's tears flow freely, if the son of sorrow weeps with no one to comfort him, be you ready to act the part of good Providence, and follow in his footsteps. O sweet are all these offices of kindness, they are the marks of genuine fear of the great Master; He will not, cannot be deceived by your vain excuses that you have it not in your power; for He knows whether you have fully endeavoured to be angels of mercy; He will judge you aright, whether or not you have applied the means of body and mind which He has placed at your disposal; and for every act done, He will be ready to measure out to you the light of his countenance, the blessing of his pleasure, whereas He will surely recompense every act of injustice, every tear of the oppressed that cries for vengeance, every sigh of the hungry that go away unfed from your inhospitable doors, as beseems those unworthy servants who know their Maker and still refuse to follow his commandments.

In your own persons too be obedient. You have received desires for worldly things which are not an evil, if they are controlled within the limits of God's law; they are on the contrary calculated to act as incentives to urge you to labour, to make your life one of industry and enjoyment. But, when they are permitted to engross the will and to control the mind, they will place your souls in a suffering state, and hurry you on to commit deeds over which the grieved spirit will have cause to weep. Just like the power

of fire, are the inclinations of man. How useful is this element when you watch and control it. It softens for you the hardest iron, that you can mould it into shapes both useful and ornamental, that you may with its means till the soil, or measure the flight of time. By its means the products of the earth, unfit for use in their crude state, are converted into savoury food, to refresh you, and to add variety to life. By it the cold of the winter is chased away, and the season of death without it is rendered one of sociality and friendship within the domestic circle. It is in brief the great element of civilization and refinement, whilst it obeys your decrees. But let it once escape from under your control, let its spirit be free to roam abroad in its wild and onward course: and it spares not the venerable and the holy, and it strides with daring steps over all that man holds dear, over all that his hands have fashioned. Even so are your own desires. Guard them well, and they impel you to all that is noble, they give birth to whatever is beautiful. They are the parents of scientific discovery, they induce you to traverse the ocean in search of improvement, they persuade you to seek for the arts which adorn life, they embellish your otherwise dull existence with the glow of eloquence and the poetic fire, they knit together the bond of friendship, and hallow the union of souls between man and his chosen helpmate, his destined companion by Providence; they unite the souls of fathers and sons, and produce the holiest of earthly affections, the love of the mother for her offspring. But remove the ennobling restraints, and with destruction and evil will they sweep over your existence: desire for improve-

ment becomes hateful ambition; honest industry is changed into sinful avarice, and holy love is transformed into hideous lust. And why? because you have forgotten that you are servants of the Most High; you have placed his fear away from you, and seek only to follow the fleeting enjoyments of the moment instead of pursuing the straight line of duty, within the narrow limits of which your religion permits you to act; because you have in fact thrown off your allegiance to your God, whilst you still profess with outward words that you acknowledge Him as your Master.

You will observe, brethren, that the prophet addresses not those who have no religious impressions, but those who make the profession thereof the business of their lives; he addresses in fact the priests who were to offer on the altar of the Lord the daily sacrifice. We are therefore warranted to apply our text as we have done to those sentimentalists who, whilst they say that they love their divine Father and fear their heavenly Master, are so careless in obedience. It will be seen that the prophet insists upon it, that it is not enough to bring a sacrifice, if it be not undefiled, and the best which the flock affords. Let us apply this to the unfortunate lip-worship with which so many of our people are affected. They too are like the priests of Malachi, they bring a sacrifice; "but it is defiled bread;" they offer the meanest things, *words without acts*, whilst the most valuable, the acts springing from a heart full of love and devotion, are not thought of, sin is encouraged in others by the example of those who are to instruct them, and the son excuses himself for transgression by appealing to

the conduct of his progenitor. Is not this contradicting their own words? If such as these honour God, why do they not act according to the law? If they fear their Master, why do they not abstain from sinning against his manifest commandments? What use are all their professions, what pleasure can the Lord have in their words, whilst they disseminate evil in the world, and deprive themselves of a portion in the life everlasting for which they are destined? And above all, why will they claim to be classed among the servants of God, whilst they are servants of sin, or at best the slaves of indolence? Why will they look with contempt upon the man of acts, as though they were better than he, because he does not think correctly? In truth, the formalist, who acts merely from habit, is sadly deficient in the ennobling feeling which a deepseated love of God can alone produce; still his acts are worth something, both to himself and as an example to others; whereas the man of words will be an injury to himself and an evil example to all those whom his authority can influence. No, our religion demands an active faith, a belief that we are God's creatures and servants, deeply imbedded in the innermost recesses of our spirit, which faith is to develop itself upon all possible occasions and every day of our life, by acts in obedience to the will of God. Let us then admire the law of our Father by which we are presented with means to be constant servants, and which requires us not to wait for great occasions to enable us to act. Whenever the Israelite rises, there is the word of the law which he is to repeat as an act of obedience; whenever he sits down to his meal, he will watch that nothing prohibited

has been placed upon his table; whenever the sun declines, there is allotted to him a brief time in which he is to address his Father in the words of entreaty and devotion; and before he seeks his couch to enjoy the nightly repose, he is again to perform a little act of devotion, and commend his spirit to his Maker ere he composes himself to sleep. And between these acts of worship, there are constant opportunities to do some little favour to the poor, to be kind in some way to his opulent neighbour, to cause some joy to the afflicted, to participate in the happiness of the prosperous, to be in fact imitating his God in his acts of mercy, to become an *Israelite*, a divine chief among men in imitation of the glorious progenitor of our race, whose devotion to God was intimately connected with love for his Master's creatures.—Thus only can we really show that the honour of our Father is not a mere hollow sound, and that the fear of our Master is a living principle which pervades all our thoughts and feelings, to stimulate us to activity in the field of duty pointed out to us by Providence. By this means too the name of the Lord will be glorified in the world; his kingdom will spread all around us, sinners will be restrained in their sinfulness, and each one so acting will be in truth a priest of the Lord, whose lips are overflowing with wisdom, and who is himself an angel of the Lord of Hosts, because he leads many away from sin, by bringing them under the rule of our Father and King, whom we pray to vouchsafe to us the light of his countenance which is life without end. Amen.

Kislev 4th. } 5605.
Nov. 15th. }

DISCOURSE XXIII.

FULFILMENT OF PROPHECY.

O, OUR FATHER! upheld by thy goodness, thy children have met the fiery ordeal of suffering and persecution without being consumed, and after every sorrow they have arisen strengthened and quickened to a renewed life, feeling that it was through Thee that they were saved, that through Thee they lived. Twice have we been driven from our heritage, because of our rebellion; but even then Thou didst temper justice with mercy; and though the sword slew its millions, each time a remnant escaped in whom there dwelt thy truth and thy law; and thus have we arisen at this late day to be the witnesses of thy power, the defenders of thy law, in whom Thou mayest be glorified. Do therefore cause that we may become fully alive to our appointment on earth, that we may steadfastly adhere to thy commandments, and not turn to the right or the left from the path which thy wisdom has marked out for us as the road which we ought to travel. So that generations which are to come after us may be urged on by our example, and that to the latest descendants of the human race thy glory may fill the world, and thy fear subdue every heart. Amen.

BRETHREN!

Through the transgressions of our fathers the temple had been destroyed, and those who ought to have

worshipped therein had been carried away into captivity; but when seventy years after the final expulsion had elapsed, the Lord had mercy on a portion of his people, and caused Cyrus to grant permission unto those, who felt inclined to return, to go up to Judæa to assist in rebuilding the house of God. We say, a portion of Israel only was included in this restoration; for history proves that a comparatively small number returned to Palestine under Ezra; and the Jews of the second temple never reached the eminence which the united Israelites had attained under David and Solomon. If one investigates therefore the biblical text with candour, he must arrive at the conclusion, that the restoration from the Babylonian captivity was not the gathering of the nation of Israel which Moses had foretold; since the majority of the people did not reassemble in Palestine, and it is not to be supposed that the return of a mere fragment could be a compensation for the continued banishment of the great mass of Israel. In truth the later prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who lived after the rebuilding of the temple, speak of a future glory of the Israelites, thereby testifying that *they* did not consider the restoration, which they themselves witnessed, as the consummation of the promises made through the prophets of the first temple and the Babylonian captivity. Now we cannot believe that the prophets predicted things which were not to occur, or that a part of what they foretold could justly remain unfulfilled whilst only a portion came to pass; for in this manner we would have to regard the predictions which proceed from the Supreme Wisdom as the assertions of mere men, which may or may not

be accomplished; and if we proceed in this way, Scripture would not afford us any guide, either to direct thereby our course of life, or to afford us any sure instruction with regard to belief and doctrine. But since we believe in the whole legacy which we have received from God, we must, and we do, regard the whole as of equal authority; and we therefore claim for the entire system of prophetic predictions an equal claim to credibility; and we do maintain that we cannot say that the prophecies with respect to our nation have been fulfilled, whilst any portion of them remains unaccomplished; and that all those predictions which have not yet been brought to pass, will sooner or later see their fulfilment, in the manner which the Holy Spirit has predicted through the mouth of the prophets. — Another point also is inseparably connected with this interpretation of Scripture, which is, that the same system for explaining the sacred records must obtain throughout; and by this rule the same word, though occurring in different parts of the Bible, must have precisely the same signification. There are however persons, who profess to believe in Scripture equally with ourselves, who have adopted a mode of explanation differing entirely from our method; since some portions have according to their manner a direct or literal signification, whilst others are explained figuratively, or in a way differing from the evident meaning of the words employed by the text. Now, it may be, that, in some of their predictions, the prophets alluded to a peculiar state of existence more spiritual than our present one, and hence the words they employed must receive a higher and more spiritual interpretation than they would in their simple

application to ordinary worldly objects. But even admitting this, the words must nevertheless bear an analogy to objects which were in existence in the days when the prophecies were delivered, and have therefore a meaning to be determined by the objects to which they bear a resemblance; and hence the rule holds good, that after all a verse of Scripture must be taken in its literal sense, in order to enable us to arrive at its proper meaning. When therefore the prophets speak in their most mysterious predictions of any particular people, they refer to that people only and no other, no matter by what affinity another nation may become allied to, or substituted for the one mentioned by them. So if the text names the people Israel, the persons comprised by that term, at the time the prophecy was delivered, must be understood, or, in other words, Israel proper, the descendants of Jacob. And in fact any other mode of interpretation would be absurd. For independently of the promises of future blessings, punishments also were foretold as being impending over the same nation. History however teaches, that the threatened visitation was actually inflicted upon the descendants of Jacob; their kings were one after the other made captives by foreign invaders; their temple was destroyed by barbarians who conquered the land; and the individuals composing the people of Israel were all driven away from their country, which was left deprived of its inhabitants, a desert and depopulated waste, and a dwelling for wild beasts, instead of being covered to the mountain-tops with waving crops and peaceful herds and flocks, instead of being the seat of numerous beautiful cities filled with a

teeming population, in the highest degree refined, and in possession of wealth and all the means of earthly comfort and happiness. If now the prophets speak of captives to return, whom can they mean but the descendants of those very men to whom they spoke, and whom they threatened with expulsion from their beautiful homes for their manifold transgressions? If they spoke of the wastes to be rendered fruitful again, what desolate fields could they possibly mean, except those fruitful plains over which their prophetic eye saw the desolating hosts of Israel's enemies sweeping with fire and sword, leaving behind them a howling desolation where before every thing smiled in plenty? If they spoke of cities arising from their ashes, to what others could they refer except those beautiful towns which then contained the thoughtless masses, who sinned forgetful that there is enthroned above a righteous God, who punishes iniquity and guilt with just retribution, although the visitation be long delayed?—Only let us consider, that the prophet spoke to Jacob's descendants; they addressed a people of which they were themselves members; the language they employed was the language of the country with which all their hearers were familiar: consequently they were understood by their contemporaries in a literal sense; and as they took no pains to expound their metaphorical meaning, if they had any such, we are empowered to assert that the only proper method of explaining prophecy is to understand it as it was understood by the persons to whom it was addressed. These evidently took it according to the literal signification of the words, or else the threatened punishments could

never have had any tendency to inspire the people with fear, or lead them to repentance; and we consequently must understand it in the same light, and look upon the terms employed as meaning precisely what they meant in the days of the prophets. If now such a construction would lead us to think that the prophecies, wherein these terms are used, have not been accomplished as yet: we are fully warranted in assuming that we must expect their fulfilment in a future time, and that no forced exposition or a metaphorical explanation of the terms can be regarded as an accomplishment of the promises delivered to us by the prophets.

Now it is evident that the restoration of the captives was not entire at the time of Ezra; a mere handful came back from Babylon; and the majority of the tribes of Benjamin, Judah, and Levi, who were carried away with Zedekiah, king of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar, not to mention the Israelites proper, or the ten tribes who were expelled by the king of Assyria, remained behind in the countries to which they had been banished. But if we revert to the thirtieth chapter of Deuteronomy (3–5), we will find the following words: "And the Lord thy God will restore thy captivity and have mercy on thee, and He will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God will have scattered thee. If thy outcasts shall be at the end of the heavens, from there will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from there will He take thee. And the Lord thy God will bring thee to the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it, and He will do good to thee and multiply thee more than thy fathers." It is true,

the returned captives lived in the same land which their fathers had inhabited; but where was their greater prosperity? where their greater numbers? But little is known of their state for many years; and when they appear again upon the field of history, what do their annals present, but dissension within and sorrows from without? Under the tutelage of the Persians and Egyptians they were not independent; when they came under the dominion of the Syrians, they groaned under the most intolerable oppressions, until from mere desperation, seeing that their religion was contemned, and death was preferable to life, they rose under the guidance of the brave Maccabees, and drove their tyrants from their soil. But even after this, they were but a feeble kingdom; and their internal feuds induced them at length to submit their quarrel to the arbitration of the generals of the Roman armies, who in their triumphant career had carried the eagle-banners of their republic to the banks of the Euphrates. And when, by degrees, Judæa had become a province of Rome, and its princes were simply the vassals of the emperors who had succeeded the republic, oppression again taught the Jews to seek for refuge in a successful rebellion, or to sink with the sword in their hands amidst the ruins of their cherished country. Victory did not perch on our banners; too much innocent blood had flowed in the streets of Jerusalem; too violent had been the feuds between contending factions, who each sheathed their swords in the bosom of their suffering country, when it ought to have been turned alone against the enemies who thundered at their gates; too much hatred dwelled in the hearts of brothers

against those of their own faith and kin: and the Lord permitted the legions who had overthrown so many states to triumph too over his sacred heritage, and Jerusalem fell beneath their onslaught, and the temple sunk under the repeated blows of their battering-rams. And those, who had stood undaunted on the last day of their country, who did not yield whilst they had a rampart to fight for, and a temple for which to shed their blood, had to grace the triumph of their merciless conqueror, and the few who had escaped were driven forth into every land, to bear their iniquity and the weight of the destiny of Israel in the farthest ends of the earth. Where was here the gathering which Moses had foretold? where that glorious destiny for which we had ever sighed as the goal of all our hopes?—How deceptive would thus have been all that we had hoped for, if the gathering under Ezra had been the accomplishment of what we had been promised by so many holy men, from the rise of our nation till its dismemberment in the destruction of the house built by Solomon; and far better had it been, if this had been all we had a right to expect, that we had remained in Babylon, and not been diminished by the constant wars to which we were subject during a second sojourn in the promised land.

To us, however, who look upon the restoration from Babylon as a mere phase in our history, as a special fulfilment of a portion only of the prophecies, whilst many of them await yet their accomplishment at a future day, it is a highly important event, which has been extremely beneficial in its results upon the development of the spirit of Israel, being a great step

in the gradual progress of mankind to a more spiritual state of existence. True, the bearers of the standard of revelation suffered fearfully in the service which they have rendered to the world; for, while they benefitted the multitude, they have endured the scorn and insults of those for whom they laboured; but glorious and blissful is their lot, notwithstanding the multitude of the sorrows to which they have been exposed. If we look with care in the pages of Holy Writ, we will discover that worldly ease and the friendship of the gentiles were not promised to the sons of Abraham during the state of warfare through which they are to pass to the glorious end; but that the very enmity of the world, which the experience of history has proved to be our lot, was to be the natural result of the state of separation which the whole scope of our religion has established between us and the rest of mankind in its unconverted state. Still, who can doubt the gradual progress of the human race? Look upon what mankind are now, compared with what they were in the most palmy days of Chaldean, Grecian, and Roman civilization; and then seek to find through whose means the changes we thus witness have been brought about: and you will discover that men, who spoke and taught in a spirit borrowed from our Bible, have commenced the revolutions in the mode of thinking of the sons of man, which will not cease in their action till the whole world will have received light and knowledge of the word of God. For let their followers conceal it as they will, the teachings of the man of Nazareth and of the pretended prophet of Mecca are based upon a knowledge of things springing from the word

of God; and though the systems of both are founded upon erroneous assumptions of a power which neither possessed, we do not wish to deny that both Nazarenes and Mahomedans are immeasurably far in advance in morals and enlightenment in divine things of those gentiles, who yet adhere to the various systems of heathen idolatry. We cannot be far wrong in maintaining, that the more intimate intercourse which the Israelites of the second temple had with the neighbouring nations, together with the translation of the law and other portions of Scripture into the Greek language, must have tended to diffuse a general knowledge of the principles of revelation among the gentiles, who lived in the vicinity of Palestine, who then, by degrees, carried their influence among those nations even who had not come in direct intercourse with the Jews. In this way it was, we may assume, that the restoration under Ezra was an event of vital importance both to the Jews, the first objects of the same, and the world at large, if even we do not claim the origin of modern civilization as traceable to this event. We may therefore say, that the glory of the second house was in this respect greater than that of the first, especially as the Jews never relapsed into idolatry during its continuance, whilst their light was by degrees diffused over every country which is blessed with the light of civilization.

Though now the world is greatly improved in religion and civilization, no one will be bold enough to assert that we have reached the utmost limits of these great blessings. As little as Israel has reached the great destiny of which the prophets speak, so imper-

fect is yet the remainder of mankind in the light and grace which are impending. With the restoration from Babylon, as I said in the commencement of this address, the prophets predicted still farther and greater benefits as in store for Israel; but they connected them also with an increased light of piety and a knowledge of the Lord among the gentiles. And among others, Zechariah spoke in the following words:

רני ושמחי בת ציון כי הנני בא ושכנתי בתוכך נאם ה׳ : ונלוו גוים רבים אל ה׳ ביום ההוא והיו לי לעם ושכנתי בתוכך וידעת כי ה׳ צבאות שלחני אליך :
זכר׳ ב׳ יד׳ טו׳ :

"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! for, behold I will come and dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations will join themselves unto the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me to thee." Zech. ii. 14, 15.

In this prophecy a twofold prediction is presented to us, the one, the special dwelling of the holy Spirit among Israel, the second the junction of many nations to the service of the Lord. It must be observed, that this prophecy was pronounced after the building of the second temple, consequently it speaks of a time subsequent to that event. Now it must be apparent to any one who inquires without prejudice, that subsequent to Zechariah no event took place to mark more strongly the dwelling of God among Israel, than it was during the prophet's lifetime. It follows therefore that, if the prophecy was not fulfilled during the period of the second temple, it must be ac-

complished at a time subsequent thereto. Moreover, it is coupled with a prediction that many gentiles are to embrace the religion of God, and become his people in the manner Israelites are so designated, whilst the Lord will still specially dwell among his own chosen servants. This also has not been fulfilled; for as yet the descendants of Jacob are the only ones who walk in the law of God.—We are well aware that the gentiles claim their new religion as an adherence to the Lord, and thus they allege the prophecy is fulfilled in them, notwithstanding they are strangers to the observances contained in the Bible. But even thus, the Scriptures cannot be said to have seen their fulfilment. For it says distinctly, that the joining of the gentiles to the Lord shall not remove his glory from Israel; the daughter of Zion is told to sing and rejoice, for God is coming to dwell in her midst. If, however, we are to believe the Nazarenes, their adoption as the people of God has worked our forfeiture of grace, their acceptance has caused us to be rejected. But this assumption is flatly contradicted by the prophet; God will dwell among us, though the gentiles are accepted; their salvation will be accompanied by our greater glory, and when they are blessed, we are to be blessed likewise. And how beautiful is this idea! In our Father's mansion there is salvation for all the world; no one will need to sorrow, while others are happy; while Israel is holy to the Lord, the children of the stranger also will be called, and they will become his people. And at this is the daughter of Zion to rejoice! How long has she mourned in the gloom of affliction, whilst the proud of the earth mocked at her sorrow, whilst those who

lived at ease bade her to bend her back, that they might pass over her prostrate form! Hah! they mocked her as one forsaken, they derided her as one wilfully blind, as one pertinaciously clinging to error. But now a new light will dawn upon the world; all will behold the truth as it is in Israel; the light of the law will be diffused far and wide over all mankind, and these now will come and acknowledge that well has the daughter of Zion done her task, that she has faithfully kept alive the sacred fire, nobly guarded the precious gift of the Lord of all; and now they will come to her temple where the glory dwells, and worship there the Name which is holiest among the holy and fearful and adored forever; and therefore will she rejoice, because that they who formerly oppressed her, and thought her hopes were vain, have now also come to worship where she worships, and to adore the same great Being who is the King and God of Israel. Then will Judah dwell securely in the holy land, Jerusalem will be the joy of all the earth; all will acknowledge that the words of the prophets were indeed the truth spoken in the name of the Most High; and then will the knowledge of the Lord fill every heart, and truth and justice will abide on earth forever. And may we all behold that glorious day, when everywhere the Lord will be adored, and peace be the lot of mankind under the dominion of the son of David. Amen.

Kislev 25th.
Decem. 6th. } 5605.

DISCOURSE XXIV.

THE DANGERS AND DEFENCES OF JUDAISM.

How great are thy mercies, O Lord! which Thou bestowest upon all that has life; for the hungry Thou providest food, for the helpless Thou providest salvation, and to the strong Thou grantest their strength, and to those who are in affluence Thou hast been the Benefactor through whom they have acquired wealth; and kings do rule by thy sufferance, and dominion appertains to nations through thy bestowal. In truth, from Thee is all which we enjoy, and nothing is granted unto us which Thou hast not ordained. We therefore call on Thee at all times and for whatever we need; we supplicate Thee in our distresses, and are grateful to Thee in our joys, well knowing that Thou art nigh to hear and to bless, to approve and to save. This has ever been the experience which thy servants have had in their pilgrimage; it was this which has kept them erect in sorrow, sustained them faithful in prosperity; and it was this which has guided thy people Israel from their going out from Egypt even unto this day.—O! do now manifest thy power as Thou hast done of old, and render us conscious of thy greatness and mercy, as were our fathers when thy mighty arm redeemed them from bondage; so that our souls may be made free from the trammels of sin and corruption, and we be enabled to travel

onward on the path wherein the righteous have ever walked, to thy glory and our justification. Amen.

BRETHREN!

No doubt you have often reflected on the singular spectacle you must exhibit to the world at large, who see not with your eyes, nor hear with your ears. They are the many, nations great and powerful, intelligent and wise, governed by all kinds of laws, living in every climate and on every variety of soil; yet they are different from you, and much as they vary from each other, they are all surprised that you should not become like some one of them. Men from among you have been appealed to, time and again, to forsake our standard, because of the hopelessness of our situation; but they have tauntingly replied, "Whom shall we join, since you all claim to be on the only road of salvation, and each one of you insists that he alone is right, and that perdition is the lot of all who differ from his respective dogmas?" Still your opinions of the contradictions around you, and the absolute impossibility you labour under of making a choice among the religions offered to your acceptance, even if you were inclined to forsake Judaism, do not weaken in the least the astonishment of mankind at your existing as you do, a separate and distinct nation, strongly marked in all the walks of life, and tinging as it were the current of human existence with the peculiar colouring which is so entirely your own. Voyagers tell us, that in approaching the mouth of some mighty river, like that stream which gathers in its bosom the floods that sweep down from the western side of the Alleghany mountains, and those

that flow in their solitude and distant courses from the eastern declivity of the rocky Andes, they can perceive distinctly the current of the river as it rushes forth far into the deep bed of the fathomless ocean, remaining unmingled with the briny fluid, whilst the impetus lasts which the river has acquired in its prolonged course, swallowed up as it is by the waste around, yet distinct and marked in its nature. Even so, Israelites, are you; your state was dissolved; in its downward course it was compelled to mingle with the great mass, the ocean, so to say, of mankind; and yet your characteristic was not, is not destroyed, and onward you flow amidst the surrounding waves, and you are seen, and felt, and known, as the offspring of that race which took its rise far away in the gloomy days of antiquity, and which has rolled on, like the river, occasionally expanding into a wide lake, shone on by the bright sun of prosperity, then narrowed down by approaching cliffs into a contracted channel, overhung to darkness by trailing shrubs and trees, which almost hide your course; still always flowing on, flowing on, true to your source, diminished perhaps in volume to the outward eye, but flowing in a deeper channel, the same now as from the beginning, and charged with the same waters which you drew from the first spring, the origin of your being, from Ur in Chaldea. Is this not a wonder? something to astonish the world around? And do you feel surprise that you are regarded with suspicion, with little love, by those who differ from you, who understand not your mission, who are ignorant of your modes of thought, and the influences which urge you on?—Still, even the calmest of us

are occasionally staggered at the perseverance of the malignity which pursues us, even in this land of liberty, where all religions are alike in the eye of the law, where the constitution knows of no difference between Jew and gentile. The more surprising is all this, since they who differ from us themselves acknowledge, that no more than the river which runs its glorious course over many thousand miles, with its hundreds of tributaries, can with truth be said to have poured forth itself on its blessed mission, have the sons of Israel chosen their own portion; for equally with the powers of nature, which work ceaselessly and noiselessly in their calling, have they received their appointment to go forth over the face of the human world, to penetrate into every dell, to seek out the remotest peaks of the snowy mountains, to leave there a portion of their fructifying power, a trace of their benign influence upon the life and actions of others. And such are we, harmless in our lives, unoffending towards the state, whether we are free or enslaved; for we say it, and dare to say it boldly that, though our people are not always free from crimes against the state, as a class they are not found herding with the malefactors, nor have the penal institutions many of them within their walls or under surveillance; and withal, if one listens to the clamour concerning us, he would be led to suppose that not alone are our souls doomed to perdition because we are Jews, but every state also is bound for its own political safety to watch that no injury result to it from the presence of the few Jewish inhabitants within its borders. Do I speak the truth? Let history answer; let me appeal to your daily experience;

let me call to witness the efforts of sectarian fanatics of all degrees and all ages to root up the vine of Jacob from the field on which the Lord's own hands have planted it!

But what is Judaism? that principle against which the world has warred so long, which has hitherto survived all the storms which have assailed it? What is it?—It is the spirit of light enkindled by the Most High in every age, when it pleased Him to make his will known to man; it is the code of peace, which teaches us to love our neighbour, to succour the needy, to aid the sick, to assist the enemy even when he needs our assistance; it is the true conception of the great Creator, which sees in all that exists but one Father, one God, one Ruler, and one Saviour, to whom every thing is known, to whom every thing is possible. Judaism couples these sublime truths, these noble principles of morality, with outward signs, call them if you will symbolical acts, which distinguish its professors at first sight from other men, which point them out to each other as children of the same original parentage, as followers of the same belief; and this is all that we can expect our ceremonies to effect for us, as a people, and only this the world without can look to of right in their estimation of our character, and the shaping of their conduct, which they are justly empowered to assume towards us as a nation and individuals. But what is the offending of which we have been guilty? why is the world inimical to us? Simply because we have persevered in our faith; simply because through good and evil report we have clung to our belief in a pure undivided unity in the Godhead; simply because we have de-

clared our invincible opposition to every system which can put any being alongside of our great Father to worship; simply because we adhere to the observance of the divinely appointed day of rest; because we declare as unclean what the Scriptures have taught us to be, those things which the Lord has declared unto us to be an abomination. In not one thing do all these alleged sins against the world, as it is, affect in the least the prosperity of the commonwealth or the tranquillity of kingdoms; in not one thing do our acts, our thoughts, our hopes, injure the peace or prosperity of any country under the sun: and yet we are looked upon with suspicion, deemed as outcasts from divine favour, avoided by the insolent fanatic as though the leprosy adhered to our flesh, and pitied, in tones of mock compassion, as though we were stricken with mental blindness, by those unwise ones who themselves have barely a glimmer of divine light to aid them in their painful struggle, to ascertain which is the right road to salvation among the many singular paths, which their system points out to the perplexed traveller. And such as these come to teach us! Such as these endeavour to tell us "Thus has the Lord spoken," when He has not sent them, and when they promulgate what has not entered into his counsels! But do they pity us for the persecution which our brothers have to endure in countries where liberty is yet a theory, and where the will of a despot is the law of the land? Do they offer their aid to disabuse the minds of the prejudiced who combine to our injury? O no! they may perhaps, it is true, profess pity in words; but they will couple their false sympathy with some such expression, "See what the

Jews have to endure in punishment for their wilful blindness, in not adopting our religion instead of their own." It is truly grating on the ear to be compelled to listen to such sympathizers, who lament the victim and secretly applaud the tyrant, because he opens in this manner a wide field for their efforts, as they fondly believe, to induce many to forswear Judaism. And these men ask us to come and listen to their harangues in which they denounce our belief; and Jews can be found to go and hear them, and some even profess to be convinced by their appeals, and become—gracious God! apostates to thy law! and they go and swear fealty to a pretended revelation which thy prophets never promulgated in thy name! and they aver to see errors in thy law which require to be amended by a more spiritual legislation, as if there could be aught truer or purer, than what Thou didst announce in olden times as the evidence of thy will!

Yes, brethren, we have heard of these doings in our days, of systematic efforts at corrupting our people; but they have generally been directed either to those who desired to profit by the learning in worldly things which they had acquired, when to the professing Jew all offices are closed in illiberal countries; or to those who sought an alliance with the daughter of the stranger, who asked the change of religion as a token of the sincerity of the professed attachment; or, not to mention other cases, where the want of information left the persons, against whom these attempts were directed, an easy prey to any argument which was urged upon the contested points at issue between us and the gentile world.

Children even placed at *school* have been approached by their *teachers and friends* with appeals on religious subjects, and they have been drawn to churches to hear doctrines laid down adverse to the Jewish belief. That in the latter instance parents have been greatly at fault for exposing their offspring to such dangerous influences; that no plea of the necessity of a brilliant education, not attainable at home, can justify a father for putting his child away where his principles may, or, to speak more correctly, will surely be endangered; that no mother can ever claim any circumstance likely to occur in ordinary life as an excuse for depriving her daughter of maternal care and supervision, at the period when impressions are most readily received, and when they are but too well calculated to be so strongly impressed as to influence their whole after-life; that, in short, the greatest blame is attachable to parents of every degree and station for leaving their offspring to imbibe such religious sentiments as circumstances may throw in their way,—is too self-evident to require any argument. But equally culpable with the negligent parents are all those, who do not apply all the means, which their talents or circumstances afford them, to enlighten the understanding of their fellow-Israelites, and to induce them by the power of persuasion, and, if possible, by argument, to remain faithful to our standard of religion. Some persons no doubt think, as parents do, for instance, when they, being faithful to themselves, admonish their children as they send them forth not to transgress too much, and never to forget that they are Jews, that they discharge their whole obligation if they themselves practise their duties, whilst they are

perfectly indifferent to the wrong done by others, even should it be occasionally in their power to arrest the evil which they see before their eyes. But let these be told that they are not doing their duty. The gentiles among whom we live understand, or rather practise better, the exercise of wholesome influence. If they see one of their people doing what they deem an offence against their system, they endeavour to alarm his conscience; and though we may not altogether approve of the means resorted to, we must acknowledge that they leave nothing untried to impress all their members with their supposed duties. This office is not alone exercised by those who are appointed public teachers, but by many others, females for instance, who never expect to be other than mere humble and uninfluential members of their respective communities. Whenever also they believe that they can have any influence over persons not of their persuasion, for instance, to induce them to read a particular book on some doctrinal question, or to listen to a sermon of some powerful controversial preacher, or to witness some exhibition where a strong evidence of the effect of their system can be displayed: you will see them anxious and ready to improve the opportunity, after their own fashion, and endeavouring to say a word in season, which is more or less effective, especially with the weak and inexperienced. But let me impress it on your minds, brethren, that we cannot afford to lose even such as these from our communion, though their adherence add ever so little strength to our cause. They are children of Israel as much as the strongest of us, and are bound by the same law as the wisest among us all.

If they are ignorant, their ignorance is to be pitied, and you, who are better instructed, should endeavour to teach them, that they may be able to withstand the appeals of the gentiles, and become themselves defenders of the holy truths that are intrusted to us in the law. If they are weak and worldly, draw them to you by mild persuasion, and by those unceasing efforts of an untiring love, which deems no labour too great, no exertion too painful, which may by any degree of possibility confirm the wavering, and bring healing to a soul affected with the dangerous imbecility which knows not its own diseased state. Let us not deceive ourselves that nothing can be done. This woful delusion has been the cause of several families having quitted the household of Israel; not because they were convinced of the truth of gentile doctrines, but simply because they had no intercourse with religious Israelites, and because their mind was absolutely uninformed of the ideas and duties which characterize us from other nations. Besides which considerations it must not be forgotten that, so far as the moral effects of such conversions extend, they are to the world at large almost as fatal, as if they took place among the really prominent members of our faith; and the triumph of those who bear no love for our race is equally great, though the changeling be one of the weakest and most worthless among us. By these means, also, family relations are, or should be interrupted; for I esteem it to be beneath the dignity of a sincere Israelite to hold any intercourse with an apostate who openly so declares himself.

Let us consider that we do not seek to make proselytes ourselves, though for my own part, and I say it

with due deference to the opinions of wiser and better men than myself, I *cannot see any good reason for being opposed to receiving them if the sincerity of their professions cannot be reasonably doubted*, as some of our people, nay the greater majority of them, are. At all events, though there can be no doubt that, if we resorted to the means gentiles employ, we could make large accessions to our numbers, it has become the settled policy of our brothers to reject even those who occasionally come forward of their own accord to claim a reception in the family of Jacob. It is evident, therefore, that we must decrease, if we do not take care that the influence from without do not rob us of a portion of our household; and it is also perfectly clear that too many, especially in this country, have formerly been left exposed to a corrupting influence strong enough to warp the judgment, if not equal to debase the reason (I speak in a religious sense) altogether. I fear that if we take a calm review of all the incidents in our own lives, I except not even myself, we may find some cause for self-accusation in not having been zealous enough in spreading the kingdom of Heaven, and preventing sin, when this was in our power. I will confess that apostacies are not so frequent, nor have those we heard of been of such a kind, that human means could in every case have prevented them; but I speak also of other grave transgressions, and therein I maintain we have not exerted our influence, nor borne a decided enough testimony to awaken and alarm the sinner. Let us take counsel from the gentiles; we can easily avoid their obtrusiveness; there is no occasion to broach the subject of our salvation in season and out of season;

but surely there are almost daily opportunities, when we mingle in society, to say or do something which will have a bearing upon our religion and the duties it enjoins. There is no demand for fanaticism, nor need we fear being ridiculed for our zeal. Perfect cheerfulness and appreciation of social pleasures can be combined with our serious conversation; and even in a jesting mood instruction may be conveyed the more striking, from the unexpected manner in which it has been uttered. But chiefly we must endeavour to place our younger branches under wholesome religious guidance, not to compel them to transgress by leaving them in situations where to live religiously is impracticable.

I know well enough that I shall be met with the objection, that in some places it is impossible for parents to educate their children commensurately with their wealth and standing; that their sons have no colleges to go to in their native towns, and that their daughters cannot obtain a sufficient knowledge of music, painting, the elegant sciences and modern and learned languages in their places of residence, distant from the centres of literature and refinement; and I shall be asked, "Are we to sacrifice the education of our children to the ceremonial observances of our religion?" I would answer "decidedly," if religion or science must be sacrificed, I say, sacrifice science; it is not the staff of life, much as it may embellish it. But there is no occasion to dread such an alternative. As far as my knowledge goes, there are high-schools of great distinction in all the larger towns of this country, where Jews are settled in considerable bodies, and in these both male and female children could be

educated, whilst they are, at the same time, domesticated with Jewish families, even if there are no Jewish schools at which the children can be placed at once under the superintendence of the teachers themselves, for their mental as well as scientific cultivation. This much to parents who themselves practise in their houses the duties of their faith. But even to those who are indifferent in this great point, great we call it, for it was made the distinguishing mark between Israel and the other nations, we would urge this consideration: At home your children, it is true, do not live according to the law of Moses; your own example is injurious to their leading a pious life; but still they hear you speak in terms of respect of your belief, and they accompany you at stated periods to the house of God. All therefore is not lost, though a great defect does exist. But now you are going to send your son to a distant college, where the regulations of the school compel him to listen habitually to prayers and sermons propounded in the name of a belief more or less hostile to your own; he is constantly plied with arguments, even in the very class-books he uses, to prove that what you believe is false and erroneous. It may be that he has learned something at home, and will thus be able to withstand the appeals to apostacy, which the people he lives with and his school-companions address to him; but is it possible that he should return home to you after an absence of four years sound in his conviction, unflinching in his attachment to our faith? You may write to him constantly in the most affectionate manner concerning his Jewish birthright (we will assume in every

thing the most favourable); he shall also occasionally come to pay you a visit during the vacation; but will all this be enough to counteract the not seeing the Sabbath sanctified, the absence of the Passover, and the non-observance of the Day of Atonement? You see I leave out all minor points; but even thus how does the question stand? is your conscience at ease? have you discharged your whole duty?

Or take your daughter at the age of twelve or fourteen away from home; you have wealth, and she perhaps has beauty and intellect. You are determined that she shall be brilliantly educated, she must shine at all hazards; and you place her at a fashionable boarding-school, where the daughters of the great of the land receive their finishing education. You may accomplish your wish thus to introduce her into a more elegant circle than is found in your own house; she associates with those whose habits are refined and whose intellect is cultivated; she acquires in their society all the branches taught to the best families of the land; but her soul remains dark to all noble impressions; she has no moral guide, her gentile teacher is not able to prove one; and what she gains in elegance she loses in goodness of heart, in truth and sincerity, those bright ornaments of a virtuous female. But assume, on the other hand, that her spirit too is to be moulded by her teacher, what becomes of the Jewish female? She is gentilized, and returns after a few years to your roof with any thing but a Jewish heart, and pities you perhaps, after the gentile fashion, for your blindness in being Jews. At all events, it will take labour, and cost you much heartburning to

make your loved child again fond of her religion, easy as its practice may be in your house, and years will perhaps elapse before the simple unity of God will again find a response in her rebellious soul.

There is one thing I have omitted, and that is the excuse occasionally made that a country-education is so beneficial to youth, especially the males, as it removes them during their age of susceptibility from the dangerous moral tendencies of a city-life; and as in most country college towns few or no Jews reside, it is requisite of course to place them with gentile families or within the walls of the college. But there is a great fallacy in this excuse. If it were that a child, after being once removed from the temptations of a city-life, would never be exposed to them again, the laziness of parents might find some palliation. But the fact is quite the reverse. The college-years are scarcely over, when the rusticated citizen is thrown with an amazing suddenness in the midst of the dissipation, which the large towns so abundantly furnish. He has been restrained for a long period, and now he will compensate himself for the time lost to pleasure. Besides this, it by no means follows that all country places are free from vice and allurement, and it is much to be feared that in a moral point the country is perhaps as corrupt as the city. But grant all in favour of the secluded village; still, as we have said, the college-life must end at last; and where is the safety of the candidate at his entrance into the great world? Only in the principles which have been implanted in him, to enjoy whatever good our earthly life may offer, but never to indulge to excess, or to

enjoy if sin be the consequence. Where then is the danger? It is in the want of moral training, in the not instilling of a deep religious veneration for what is good, and a detestation for what is bad. But this is the province of the father, the duty of the mother: they are to curb the passions in early years; they are to implant the silent monitor; they are to watch that the rank weeds of unbridled license do not choke the holy aspirations for what is good and noble; and if they neglect to do this, if they cannot succeed, can they believe that a paid schoolmaster, who has a hundred boys under his supervision, will or can do that for so many, what they fail to or cannot effect in one or two? Can they be so deluded as to imagine that in a school, where there are fifty boarders, an aged woman and five or six assistants can attend in the least to a proper training of the affections and the intellect, after they have been worn out to weariness with the hearing of recitations for eight hours during the day: when they themselves acknowledge that one or two girls cannot be managed at home, with ample leisure and servants to take from them all the laborious cares of a family?

I have not exhausted the subject, but only given you materials for reflection. Consider, then, that Israel as a people requires a union of labourers, who conjointly must aim to establish a holy sentiment of devotion in the hearts of all, and to elevate our character in the eyes of the world; so as to counteract, not by wordy demonstrations, but a silent and effectual effort, the inclination which the worldly-minded may wish to instil in many to forsake the standard of

our religion. But not merely nominal conformists only do we want; we need intelligent thinkers, and faithful actors, who can guide others and promote good by their example. Thus can we best exemplify that we are a holy people, and thus can we show in our life how it could happen that, despite of our dispersion, we have been able to maintain our identity amidst the nations which surround us on all sides. Let us prove that we esteem highly the announcement which God made to Moses:

ולקחתי אתכם לי לעם והייתי לכם לאלהים וידעתם כי אני ה׳ אלהיכם המוציא אתכם מתחת סבלות מצרים: שמות ו׳ ז׳:

"And I will take you unto me for a people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God who bring you forth from beneath the burdens of Egypt." Exodus vi. 7.

When this promise was made we were marked as the bondmen of Egypt, whose every aspiration was suppressed under the heavy burdens which were laid upon us. But then the Lord became emphatically our God, by giving us his law and separating us from all the world besides. Nations since have warred against our state, overwhelmed our greatness; but we have continued undiminished, though always assailed. And now it is for us, the men of the present generation, to take heed that the blessed stream shall still flow onward, glorious, deep, holy! Be it then the study of all to aid in what concerns all; and thus only can we be accepted, and thus only can we fulfil our

task, which each Israelite has received from his God and Maker. And may He strengthen and guide us safely. Amen.

Shebat 2d. } 5605.
Jan. 10th. }

END OF VOLUME FIFTH.

GTU Library
3 2400 00453 4495